

DELORAINÉ.



VOL. II.

DE LORAIN E.

BY

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Why that bosom gored?
Why dimly gleams the visionary sword?
POPE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DELORAINE.

CHAPTER I.

THUS then I entered upon a new scheme and order of existence. I had been married before. I had wedded an angelic creature, whose heart had been exposed to no vexations, whose affections were new. All was reciprocal and in unison between us; we had no secrets from each other. What one thought, the other thought; what one desired, the other desired. We were never happy but in each other's society. The live-long day appeared but too

short for our intercourse, our communications, and our love.

In my second marriage I experienced not less satisfaction and transport. But it was of another kind. It has been said, There is no true love but between equals ; and Margaret and I were not equals. We were each full of observance to the other : but upon how different a principle it proceeded ! She was the receiver ; I the received. She was in a great degree passive, attentive to my lightest wishes, desirous of even anticipating my contentment. Her thoughts waited on my thoughts. But I was full of impulse, fervour, restlessness. I looked to her as the divinity I adored. Nothing I did in relation to her satisfied me. Nothing was good enough to be worthy of her excellence.

Margaret was pale, frail, scarcely qualified to encounter the difficulties and hardships attendant on the commerce of her species. I

looked upon her as an inestimable jewel, inclosed in a purse of tiffany, almost of gossamer. I was anxious to defend her against the rudeness of the breeze that scarcely stirred the leaves of the poplar.

It were nothing indeed, if she had been characterised merely by tenderness and softness. But I remarked, within the bewitchingness of this outward shew, the nicest discernment and the most unspotted integrity. Her life, especially for many months past, for years, ever since lord Borradale had presented himself at the cottage of the Severn, had been a life of sacrifice. Her first purpose had been to consecrate herself, her soul, and all her vital powers, to the obedience of her father. As long as she was capable of perseverance and going on to the goal she had chosen, she quailed not, nor allowed her devotion to swerve. And now, after the melancholy catastrophe of

her lover, her first thought was how she could best console her parents.

Her father had resigned his ruling passion, the cherished weakness of his nature, that he might bring back his daughter to life, to health, to contentment. She had subscribed to this his generous act of self-denial. How could she do otherwise? She began to feel, as he had felt, that her existence was suspended upon the issue. She could not, she grieved that she could not, control the powers of nature. It might be an exalted act on her part to die, rather than seem, even in thought, to disobey the authors of her existence. But this would not gratify her father. He desired to behold her the daughter-in-law of lord Borradale. He could not endure so much as to imagine, that, instead of seeing her a bride, he should see her a corpse, and himself close upon her the portals of the tomb. At last therefore both father

and daughter had agreed that she should be united to the lover of her choice. Thus, in perfect accord with her duty, and with the cordial assent of her parents, she had had the prospect of entire happiness with (as she believed it) the worthiest, the tenderest, the most affectionate, the best of human beings.

But heaven had ordered it otherwise !

Should she then, thus tried, thus bereaved by the almighty Author of the universe, give way to despair ? No. She would still apply herself to discharge the duties that were left her. Her father should not see her the victim of irretrievable sorrow. She would shew herself worthy of the parent, who for her sake had made so generous a sacrifice. He had done his part, all that could be required of the most affectionate and exemplary father ; and she would do hers. He should see, that she was not like the poppy of the field, its head sur-

charged with dew, its stalk broken, and that is no more able to lift itself, no more to be numbered with the flowers of the earth. What could not be restored, should be forgotten by her ; or, if not forgotten, should not have the power to prevent her from filling her due place in society, or presenting herself in the eye of the almighty Creator, as one who, if she had received certain talents, had not failed to apply them to such purposes as her opportunities allowed her.

When therefore I looked at Margaret, I found in her nothing but what was pleasant, delightful, adorable to the eye, while all within was simplicity and wisdom, entire integrity, and consummate virtue. When I saw her, I saw the most transcendant, and at the same time the most delicate thing, that ever met the eye of man, or that imagination ever framed. I thought of her as of a pearl beyond all price. When I met her at the breakfast-table, clad in

all the simplicity of her morning attire, my heart rejoiced within me. When I saw her amidst the parterres of her garden, she was the fairest flower, or rather she was as the orb of day, from which all of them derived their colour, their health, and their sweetness. When I returned to her from a short absence, what were the transports with which I beheld her ! In absence she was my dream ; I turned a thousand times to view the curling smoke as it rose from the residence in which she dwelt. Or, if every token of its existence were rendered by distance undiscernible, still I knew the direction in which it lay, and my heart beat and trembled, even as the magnet trembles towards the pole.

In every thing I studied her pleasure, and never ceased to enquire within myself what could tend to her gratification. Her health was precarious ; her frame was delicate ; and still I thought what food, what exercise, what

reading, what topics of conversation, what amusements, what scene of residence, the atmosphere of what part of England, or of Europe, would be most congenial and sanitary to her. I watched her eye, her lips, the indications of peace or uneasiness, of content or discontent, that were to be found in her countenance. When she spoke, how I hung on the tones of her voice ! That little organ is capable, I had almost said, of millions of modulations. The catalogue, digested by my penetration and vigilance, did not certainly comprehend them all ; but it was of considerable extent. If her eye brightened, how was I penetrated with joy ! The clouds and sunshine of the human countenance, and these are infinitely more numerous and variable than those of an April day, I could read them all. When a thought or a feeling was yet but half-conceived, and lay unmaturing and in embryo, I caught it, I discerned it, I encountered it, as

the case might be, with cordial welcome, or with opportune prevention.

Margaret was to me what a favourite toy or plaything is to an affectionate child. She was like the little bird, that the child thinks she can never enough caress, or testify her fondness for. She was like the fetiche of an Arabian devotee, a relic in which a portion of the divinity is supposed to take up its residence, and which is as an amulet, that, as long as it is retained, fails not to “keep far off each thing” of calamity or evil. I considered the house as blest that contained her, and every thing upon which she smiled as deriving from that smile a character of inviolableness. It was impossible then that I should not be superlatively happy; for did I not possess her? and, as often as I pleased, could I not satisfy myself with beholding her figure and her countenance? I was ready to exclaim with the queen of Sheba in holy writ, “Happy are thy men, and happy

are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee !”

Indeed Margaret never appeared to greater advantage, than as surrounded by the establishment, at the head of which I had placed her. She was most scrupulous and indefatigable in the discharge of her duties as a matron, a patroness, a regulator, a directress of all that fell under her superintendence ; for duty was the sanctuary at which she worshipped. Nothing could exceed the delicacy, the neatness, the elegance of every service and arrangement that passed under her inspection. And, as I have already said, all that approached her were happy. Her rules were so perfect and so simple, that to wait upon and to follow them was felt like perfect freedom. She spoke to all with such considerateness and kindness, that each individual was delighted with the very sound of her voice. “When the ear heard her, it blessed her ; and when the eye

saw her, it gave witness to her." There was a benignity in her smile, which no imagination could paint to itself but that of him who had viewed it. And she did not confine herself to the imparting pleasure by the kindness of her looks. She studied the contentment, the ultimate advantage, the very desires of all that approached her. No one came near her without being the better for it.

The discharge of her duty in Margaret carried its own reward along with it. Occupied as she was in providing for the happiness of others, it was not in the nature of things that she could altogether fail in sharing what she dispensed. Hers was an active life. For every hour and every minute of the day she had something to do, to think of, to premeditate, or to observe. Not that she was always in action; her life was far removed from restlessness, hurry and perturbation. But that the goodness of her disposition was for ever overflowing upon

others. She constantly meditated upon order, arrangement, improvement, improvement of herself, and of all that came within the sphere of her influence. And, being engaged in this train of doing what her judgement approved, she daily drew nearer to the state of forgetting that she had ever been unfortunate. The image of her William, that was impressed upon her heart of hearts, perpetually grew fainter ; it presented itself less frequently than it had done, and not with the same degree of agony.

It was even thus that I experienced weeks, nay months of perfect fruition, so that not a day passed over my head that I did not congratulate myself upon the inestimable prize that I had drawn in the lottery of life. I was a creature altogether different from any thing I had felt in myself for the last fifteen years. They had had their pleasures. But these pleasures had been few and thinly dispersed over

the current of my days. They were the fertile Oases, the little islands of verdure, scattered over an immense Libyan desert. But now I never woke in the morning without the consciousness of my good fortune. I never lay down at night but in serenity and satisfaction. My sun always shone; my firmament was always cerulean; my garden was enamelled with each colour of the bow of heaven;

And with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled.

CHAPTER II.

THIS had a pause. I felt a vacuity; and I knew not why. It was not that I stood in need of still further novelty, or that I wanted a more various succession of gratifications to fill up the craving of my soul. It was that no one of my pleasures, when I analysed it, when I savoured and dwelt upon it deliberately, was complete. It was by slow degrees that I detected this.

I had Margaret, as the partner of my board, as the person who superintended my establishment. I could see her when I pleased. I could sit by her side for hours together, and always found her obliging. She listened to me

apparently with an unwearied attention. She would do whatever I desired; she would sing, or play, or ride, or walk, and to a certain degree be merry or sad, as I gave the signal for the one or the other. Why was not I contented? What could I reasonably desire, that was not within my reach?

It was that the soul was not there. All that Margaret did, was in the spirit of discharging a duty. Her hand was stretched out to me; she was ever ready, at the slightest intimation, to call up all her powers to perform my bidding; but her heart did not beat towards me. From moment to moment she still relapsed, subsided, into herself. I was perhaps too subtle in continually devising my own uneasiness and discontent. If at any moment I looked at her, when she did not expect to be observed, I could see that her mind was absent, that her thoughts were engaged in something remote, and which had nothing to do with her husband. She had

a secret store, a hidden treasure, that no one was to look upon but herself. When she was alone, the casket that contained this treasure, did not wait for her to apply the key, to display to her admiring eyes its reserved beauty; it had a sympathetic virtue, and opened before her unbidden. When she was in society, this hidden idea was never long absent from her thoughts. I most sacredly believe that she did not encourage this wandering of the mind, this departure from what she regarded as her recorded duty. No; she strove against it; and, though it rose a thousand times, she each time wrestled with, and defeated it. But it had an energy that could never be extinguished; the tenacious invader, though wounded in the most vital places, and apparently killed, yet returned afresh to the attack, and shewed a vigour never to be diminished.

Margaret therefore was present with me in appearance, but absent in reality. She was in

my apprehension like one of those *simulacra*, those unsubstantial effigies, spoken of by Lucretius, that “mock our eyes with air,” and seem to be with us, when the actual persons are far absent, and are wholly unconscious of where their representatives are, and what they may appear to be doing. She was like the Hercules we read of in the *Odyssey*, a mere empty shade, seemingly vexed in Tartarus, when personally he was in heaven, the partaker of endless felicities.

I compared the life that I now spent with Margaret, with that which I had passed with my first wife, the faultless and all-perfect Emilia. That was emphatically an union of two souls in one. Our desires always corresponded; we chose the same things; our frankness was unbounded; neither of us had even a thought that was a secret from the other. That was indeed a happiness which left nothing to be desired.

What was my present situation? When I saw Margaret, I saw a creature than whom imagination could not shape any thing more resplendent and divine, and who, beside this, acquired an additional interest with me, inasmuch as she was the child of misfortune, oppressed with a calamity that never could be removed, and who therefore called forth that peculiar species of tenderness which is the sister of pity, at the bottom of my heart. But, in the most emphatical sense, she was nothing to me. What I thought, was not what she thought; what I felt, was not what she felt. She had her seat of retirement and privacy, where I must never come; to that which passed in her heart of hearts I was to be for ever a stranger. I had her body, all outward duty, honour and observance; her mind was another's.

It is true, I ought to have been prepared for this. No deception had been practised upon

me. Her virgin heart, the first impulses of her guileless youth, had been given to her William. I had consented, I had eagerly desired, to make myself one with this child of disappointment; I had sued to be the guardian of this beautiful fane, even as it thus lay in ruins. What right then had I to complain?

Alas, what availed it me to reason in this manner? To love, and to be wise, is denied, we are told, even to the Gods above. In truth, was ever man in any case reconciled to suffering, by the consideration that he had deserved no better? She was my wife. She had approached with me to the altar, and had taken the vows which had been tendered to her in that character. By every law, human and divine, she was mine. Could I be contented then, to keep this most precious of earthly possessions, this thing so emphatically my own, while a "corner" of it was retained "for others' uses?"

It is true, that the claim of William was elder than mine. She had loved him, before I was a candidate for her affections. She had given me all that it was still in her power to give. She could not therefore be to blame. The laws of nature she could not reverse; that on which the past had set its seal, it is not in the power of omnipotence itself to recal.

This however, after all, was bare reasoning. I felt that I had a wife, who was in the strictest sense not a wife. I felt that I sat in unblamed communion with the first of heaven's creatures, while I was at the same time in truth a stranger to her.

It was worse than this. Oh, I do not half do justice to the agony of my condition! I knew her thought; I knew in general terms the topic upon which her mind was exercised; though I did not know it in all its detail. She was aware that I possessed her secret, that she had a window in her bosom, that her heart was

transparent to me. But, though she knew this, she dared not speak her thought; she would have held it sacrilege to utter so much as a syllable respecting it. I was aware too of her timidity, her terror, the meaning of her silence, the words that were for ever bursting their bounds, and forcing their way to her lips, but were never pronounced; and I ventured not by the slightest indication to betray my consciousness. Was ever constraint like this constraint?

I was therefore full surely a discontented man. I bore about with me a repining spirit. My bud of happiness was withered; and all the remainder of my days consigned to bleak and barren disappointment.

Yet, in spite of all this, I loved the fair one, with whom I had entered into the public contract of everlasting union. Loved! Nay, I doated on her. She was inexpressibly beautiful. The pale languor that hung about her for ever, the whiteness in her cheek, the sick-

liness that impressed its stamp upon her countenance, rendered her interesting beyond the power of words to speak. It was not the sickness we so often see, which conveys to us the idea of disorganisation, an unhealthful and ruined frame. It was as if a member of the host of heaven, fated to exist through everlasting ages, had experienced some heavy and heart-striking disappointment. I could not live without seeing her. It was necessary for me not only to know that she was safe : I besides required for this the “ sensible and true avouch of my own eyes.” Though she did not by her looks convey to the by-stander the notion of one in whom the seeds of death had rooted themselves, yet even her pure and healthful delicacy, so to express myself, awakened in my mind the idea that she might escape me, and be no more. She needed care, and soothing, and encouragement ; and who so proper to exercise that care as myself ? It is one

of the canons of our nature, that we love a thousand times the more the being who depends on us for its preservation.

Yes : however paradoxical it may seem, I should not have loved the most beautiful creature in female form, with vigorous and unabated health, with a glad and laughing eye, and whose limbs were alert and active as those of a young roe on the mountains, half so well as I loved Margaret. Tenderness is the name for a lover's most exquisite sensation ; protection is implied in his most generous and heart-thrilling impulse.

In a word, I felt that she was not a wife. I confessed that I had promised myself a Juno, and had embraced a cloud. Yet from my heart I forgave her. I was bitterly disappointed ; but I harboured no resentment. And wherefore should I ? She had practised no deception. I grant that I had been deceived ; and that I daily felt that deception more acutely. But I

was self-deceived. What I had expected, and what was necessary to my happiness, was in opposition to the course of nature. I might as reasonably have looked that the sun should return in its orbit, and set at the point from which it rose, as that Margaret should forget all the bitterness of her fate, and be given up, heart and soul, to the unfortunate man who was now her husband.

The position upon which I was thus cast, had a singular effect on my temper and frame of mind. I had for fifteen years been a widower. During that time the train of feelings which belong to the intercourse between two persons of opposite sexes vowed to each other, had fallen into disuse with me. I might be said to have grown old in habits of concentration and uncommunicativeness. But I found, when the trial came, that I had not grown old. The spirit of the affections was as much alive in me as ever. The longer the stream had been

interrupted, the more impetuously did it seem to flow, when every obstruction to its course was removed, or rather when a new channel had been opened in which it might freely spread itself. My observance was probably more fervent and intense towards Margaret, than it had ever been to Emilia. Even the period of life I had reached, appeared to have the effect of rendering my devotion more steady and unalterable. I had lost much of the levity and mercurialness of youth, and the train of my purposes and actions became more profound. And, along with this, came the singularity of my situation with my present wife: ever devoted, ever watchful, never satisfied. My anxiety over her grew, even from this cause, that that consummation, that entire union of feelings and desires, that complete pouring out of the soul towards each other, which marriage in its most perfect form proposes to itself, never arrived between us.

CHAPTER III.

IN this situation, this state of acute and morbid anxiety, the astounding intelligence reached me, that William lived. Six months from my marriage had scarcely elapsed, when I received the information.

As I have already related, he had by a mere accident been flung into the sea, at the very moment that he purposed to leap from the Roebuck into the long-boat, by whose means all those on board were saved, that were supposed to have escaped alive. He had however recovered the shock ; he had been seen swimming towards the boat ; he was on the point of being taken in, and delivered from a watery

grave ; when an immense wave intervened, carried him many yards from the point he had reached ; and he was seen no more. Almost at the same instant, from the force of a new sea, the ship made a violent plunge, and went to the bottom. No one doubted that, in this melancholy crisis, the life of the lover of Margaret had been added to the wide destruction that had then been accomplished.

Several years had now elapsed, during which nothing had been heard of this unfortunate youth. He had been seen to be carried away by the roaring and remorseless element ; he had failed of his chance of being taken into the boat ; the ship itself, before the very eyes of those who had lately been its inmates, was finally and suddenly submerged in the ocean. What chance was there that in so desperate a circumstance he should survive ? If he had, would he not speedily have been heard of ? If by some providential interposition he had been

picked up at sea, would he not have been landed on his native shore by those who saved him? He came to be married—recalled from a painful exile, by those who had occasioned his banishment, with the purpose to have his most sanguine wishes crowned with success, to be united to the excelling and constant she in whom his very heart was centred,—was it possible that any thing but death could have detained him from her longing arms? Margaret had never a single thought that could obscure that of her William. She saw him perpetually in her dreams : but she saw him as a ghost. She had been in a manner an eye-witness of his tragic fate : it was too real to be doubted : hope itself could not conjure up the conception that he lived. For a time however she remained a faithful widow to her true lord ; she would have “served seven years, and they would have seemed to her but a few days for the love that she bore him ;” she knew she

could never be in a pure and genuine sense the wife of another. But she thought she had duties that survived; and she submitted accordingly. When she had waited for years; when fancy had during that period been her meat and her drink, and she took in a manner no other nourishment; when, if she met the eyes of her parents, she saw what they expected of her, though they would not utter their thoughts,—she recollected what she owed them, how much her father had sacrificed of his darling passion, and she resolved that she would once more force her way into the scene of human things, and do what she could to recompense him for his self-denial.

It was under these circumstances that a letter was put into my hands by my valet. It was directed to Margaret by her maiden name. She was from home at the time, on a visit to her parents. It had travelled to different places, and at length reached the scene of my

abode. It was marked on the outside, "Ship-Letter."

The sight of this letter struck me like a thunderbolt. It filled me with all wild and appalling impressions. What was I to believe? I had a presentiment, that in some way or other it related to William. Yet what could there be to be communicated? He was dead. The dead indeed in many cases left relatives, left property behind them, and there was information to be given, and questions to be resolved respecting these. But, after so long an interval, this was not a likely solution. It was besides a "ship-letter." When the remorseless waves have closed over a man, and taken away the principle of thought and action from his visible frame, it might almost as soon be expected that they would restore to life that which they had destroyed, as that they would render back to us any precise intelligence how he had died; the tomb is silent; and the ca-

verns of the ocean yield us no account of the hidden things they contain.

The more I dwelt on these circumstances, the more my uneasiness increased. I felt as if my fate, for all the remaining period of my existence, was folded up in the cover of this little letter:—and I felt truly !

On what was I to resolve ? Propriety seemed to require that, as the letter was addressed to Margaret, it should be delivered into her hand with the seal unbroken. But what had propriety to do with a case like this ? Ordinary rules are made for ordinary occasions. There is doubtless a decorum that ought to be observed in the common intercourses of human beings. But this was not an affair of usual occurrence. This letter might shut up in it more evils and distempers than are said to have been inclosed in the box of Pandora.

In a word I broke open the letter. Its contents came up to my worst apprehensions.

William was an excellent swimmer. By the

strength of the waves he had been carried far out to sea ; and he soon found that it would be in vain for him to think of making the shore by his single exertion. He turned towards the ship. He had been enabled to reach it on the side that stooped lowest towards the waves ; and for a moment he felt once more that he had somewhat solid on which the sole of his foot was planted. It was but for an instant. But that instant was every thing to him. The thought darted into his mind, that his only remaining chance for life consisted in his fastening himself to a piece of the wreck. A loose plank lay near him ; a piece of rope offered itself to his hand. This he coiled round the plank and his own body in a manner so secure, that they could scarcely by any shock be separated again. The ship sunk ; but himself and the spar were unconnected with the ship. He floated ; and in a short time was able by his exertions to give an impulse to the plank and himself, that carried him away from the

gulf in which the vessel was absorbed. He thus remained on the surface for hours even after all sense had deserted him. In this state he had been taken up, and placed on the deck of an English frigate. By the assiduous efforts of those about him he was in no long time restored to life; but his powers were so much exhausted, that, for a considerable space, he possessed no distinct recollection. He neither knew where he was, nor what were the events that had immediately preceded. All seemed to him like a dream. He looked with wonder upon the persons around him; every one was a stranger. Before he was able to tell a coherent tale, or signify his wishes and desires, the frigate was already far out upon its voyage. From the effects of what he had suffered while floating alone between life and death, or from some other cause, he was seized with a dangerous illness; and his health long remained in a precarious state. The frigate was already not

far from St. Helena, when she fell in with two Spanish vessels, and, after an obstinate resistance, was obliged to submit to the enemy. By her captors she was carried into Carthagena, where it was some time before William recovered his strength ; nor was it till after multiplied misfortunes, and having passed through a vast variety of adventures, that he had finally landed on the shores of his native country.

The interval of his absence appeared to him as nothing. It was like the story of the sultan, who in apprehension had passed through a period of twenty years, a state of unrivalled good-fortune, and a state of abject slavery, and found in the result that all this had only occupied the time in which he plunged his head in a tub of water, and drew it out again, and saw all his courtiers standing round him just as before. So William had done and suffered much during his expatriation : but, the moment he came in sight of the land in which resided the fair one

he loved, these realities faded into the painting of a dream. He fancied that he should find every thing, just as it had been announced to him in his letters of recal written more than four years ago. He imaged to himself Margaret still standing on the cliffs at Plymouth looking out for his arrival. He knew her too well to apprehend that her heart could be changed. He would as soon have believed that the island of Great Britain had been swallowed up by an earthquake, as that Margaret would not wait for his return however long, or, even in case of his death, would not have remained faithful to his memory as long as she existed. He had therefore written to her from on board the ship that brought him to England. He had been prevented from entering the first boat that came alongside, and had delivered his letter to the officer that carried the dispatches, with directions that he should put it in the post the instant he was able to do so.

The letter overflowed with all the earnest impatience of a lover. The writer alluded to the multiplied disasters that had overtaken him, and spoke most feelingly of the grief the person to whom it was addressed must have suffered on his account. He had been a prisoner of war ; he had undergone every kind of privation and indignity ; he had wandered among “ deserts and mountains, and in caves and dens of the earth.” But, through all these vicissitudes, the image of Margaret had followed and sustained him ; he had seen her angelic and benign countenance, and heard the affectionate tones of her voice, constantly amid the darkness of the night ; and this had given him courage to persevere and to live through his bitterest reverses. And now he was returned to reap the reward of all his sufferings, while she would pour the balm of sympathy and love into his wounded breast.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT a letter was this for me to peruse ! It stripped in a moment the rainbow colours in which the world had been clad in my eyes, and exhibited in their stead

. . . . all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, unutterable, and worse
Than fable yet had feigned, or fear conceived.

Of late I had been dissatisfied with my condition, and had complained that I had a wife and no wife, a woman who was mine in all external duty, but whose heart was buried with another in his watery grave. But this was a refinement of the imagination, the uneasiness of a man surrounded with indulgencies, but

who pined for something more. I had attention, observance and tenderness. I had a companion, the ornament of her sex, who devoted all her powers to the making me happy, and to the providing me with every species of gratification. Of living creatures I was the one in whom her thoughts were centred. Her eye followed me in all my movements; she regarded it as her sacred duty to watch my thoughts and anticipate my wishes; and what she did for me was done with such tenderness, so single a heart, and so ingenuous a disposition, that I must have been a brute indeed not to have felt the most ardent gratitude and the sincerest transport.

Yes, I had been happy! I felt myself so; I have acknowledged that I was happy. The corner in my heart that I reserved for discontent, was one of its remotest recesses, into which my thoughts retired, when they had been already saturated with sweets, when they

overflowed with serenity, and when in mere wantonness they sought for a proof that I was mortal, that I had not every thing, and that I could find a flaw, a sensible imperfection, in the otherwise round and polished surface of my joys.

What was I now ? There was a being to whom the heart of Margaret was devoted more emphatically than to me. But every one was satisfied that that being had long ago been numbered with the dead. Successive seasons, as we believed, had whitened his bones upon some distant shore. I might as well be jealous of the devotion that exalted religion pays to the virgin Mary, or to the almighty Author of the universe, as of Margaret's love for William. She devoted herself to me above any other inhabitant of the earth ; and I ought to be satisfied. I had no rival. The chastest spirit may love ideal beauty and excellence without censure ; no one would be so irrational as to be

jealous of the creations of Apelles or Raphael, of the radiance of Helen, or the conjugal affection of Andromache; and he who has quitted the busy scene of living things, is "but as a picture."

Henceforth my condition was altogether different. There was a man that she preferred to me and to all the world. In the eye of heaven he was her husband. Nothing but death had divorced them. Love had never been proved by such a variety of tests, as the love of Margaret for William. In its first trial she had resolved to sacrifice all the yearnings of her soul in obedience to her father. She persisted; and her life was on the point of becoming the victim of her duty. She could command external things, her actions and her words. But she could not root the image of him she loved from her heart. There it lay, sapping and wasting away the elements of her existence. When she learned with every evidence of au-

thenticity that William was dead, her situation was different. She became comparatively resigned: she did not struggle against the decrees of heaven and the laws of nature. But what a picture did her resignation exhibit? She sat bloodless and patient, the image of despair. It was in vain that with her corporal presence she joined in the song and the dance; it was palpable to all, that her spirit was absent, and that she no longer participated in the concerns, the gaieties, or the more serious affairs, of the world.

But then she knew, or she believed that she knew, he was dead. She bowed herself to the visitations of heaven, and acted accordingly. It was impossible to guess what would be the convulsions and throes of her soul, when she received the fatal tidings which this letter imparted. No imagination could picture the sufferings that were reserved for her. In the case of young Borradale she had bended, not merely

to the wishes, but to the imperious commands of her father. She had signified by letter to her lover what was determined on, before it took place; and this was much. She had sought his consent, and received it. But now—

Her father, after severe efforts, and the thorough conviction of his mind, had given his sanction to her union with William. He had resolved never again to interfere with her own election on the sacred subject of marriage. The youth had been summoned from a distant hemisphere; and nothing but what appeared to be the inexorable decree of fate had separated them.

He had not however perished, as had been supposed. He had gone through a multitude of sufferings, which would naturally give him new merit in the eyes of his mistress. He had risen above a thousand obstacles, and was returned to claim the reward of unmingled happiness.

Her attachment had been entire, never to be rivaled, never to be extinguished. To hear then that he still lived, would be to her the bitterest reproach. False, fickle, inconstant woman ! Why had she not waited for him ? Who called on her to give up the man, to whose claims her father had affixed his sanction ?

To hear that he was living, what a shock would it inflict on her ! I could scarcely conceive her surviving it. It would totally change her situation in the world, and even her identity. She would be compelled to regard herself with detestation. What, when she had been free to act at her discretion, when all compulsion had been carefully withheld, that she should then have deserted this God of her idolatry !

He had been reported to be dead. But it is the first dictate of true love, to cling with unalterable tenacity to the object of its adoration, against hope to believe in hope, and scarcely

to yield to despair, even though the evidence of our senses should be called in to induce us to relax our hold. But to yield to rumour! Even in a vulgar trial for murder, when the individual removed is worthless, and perhaps more than worthless, when no interest is involved but that of general justice and the security of the abstract existence of society in its members, the law has wisely provided, that no one shall be condemned and executed for murder, till it has been shewn that the individual supposed to be murdered is actually dead—no absence, no lapse of years, is admitted as satisfactory—the body must actually be produced—the seizure effected by the great conqueror of the world must be fully ascertained. And was not William entitled to the precaution and scruple, that would be exercised in the case of such an individual? These infallibly would be the reflections of Margaret.

And was she then a wife? Would she count

herself for such? No, she was a being for whom society has coined no appellation. She was the despised and rejected of the human race. She must fly to the most frightful solitudes, and call upon the mountains and hills to cover her.

William was the youth whom only she had ever loved. As a high point of filial duty, as a refinement upon the obligations of a moral being, she had given her hand to me. But she never loved me, in the sense in which she had loved the companion of her youth. She discharged the bonds into which she had entered towards me in the most exemplary manner. She watched for my interests; she watched for my gratifications. But this was an affair of the head, and not of the heart. She did what she did, because it became her, and because she could not hold herself excusable for the smallest omissions. And the steadiness with which she adhered to all this was inexpressibly lovely

and admirable. But there was certainly nothing approaching to romantic in her attachment to me.

Margaret's therefore was not the common case of the wife of two husbands. That of itself is nearly the most distressful situation in which a human being can be placed. But her entire, her unequalled attachment, as I have said, was to William. He engrossed her whole heart. He was the subject of her dreams ; his image intruded, in spite of her firmest resolutions, into all her duties. She was absent in spirit, when she seemed most to be engaged in the affairs of her new condition. When she talked to me, and when she listened to me, she paid a kind of forced attention to whatever was passing. But her heart was not there. She was buried with the imaginary deceased ; and it was only a delusive semblance of herself that survived. To know therefore that William lived, would shake her whole frame with the

crash of an earthquake : to think that, while he still lived, she had voluntarily given herself to another, would unseat her reason, would in all probability extinguish in her the principle of life, and instantaneously associate her with the dead. Her agonies would be like those which we might conceive an exalted enthusiast to undergo, upon whom, when engaged in the act of sacrificing to them that are no gods, the true Monarch of heaven should visibly descend in all his brightness.

CHAPTER V.

I WAS at the present instant the sole depositary of this awful secret. It was my office to take care that the intelligence should never reach the person most deeply concerned in it. But how was this to be effected? I had intercepted a letter. But how was I to be secure that this letter, especially if it remained unanswered, would not be followed by another? William himself would infallibly set out in search of his beloved. When and from what quarter of the heavens would he come? How was it possible for me to encounter and intercept him? If I desired to write to him, and endeavour, by a representation of the real state of things, to

prevail on him to withhold his intrusion, and suffer my wife to remain in her present state of enviable ignorance, to what place was I to address my letter? He had landed on the coast of Sussex, and the post-mark on the cover of what he had written was "Bright-helmstone." But was there any chance that he would remain there long enough, for the expostulation I should address to him to reach him?

He would doubtless hear, before he made his way into the presence of Margaret, that she was already married. What then? What would be his conduct, when he had learned these tidings of despair? The most obvious impulses of the human mind would lead him to seek an interview. No, he would say, I will not consent to be assured of my fate from any lips but her own! He could not avoid—he would not be a true lover, if he could avoid—the desire to stand in her presence, that he

might pour out his soul before her, that he might tell her all his agonies, that he might lay open before her her thoughtless cruelty, that he might—not die in her presence—but that at least he might take of her a solemn farewell, that he might unload his “bosom of the perilous stuff,” which he could not long carry about with him and live. It was a melancholy and a fearful gratification, to take one last look of the being he had loved beyond all the world, to hear from herself the account of what she had suffered, and what had induced her to act in a way that a sibyl or an inspired prophet could never have persuaded him to believe she would pursue, and to receive from her her final adieux. This at any rate was the conduct that I persuaded myself William would adopt.

And from this visit, which I nothing doubted would at least be attempted, I was bound to guard the unfortunate female who had been

cast on my protection. Whom was I to guard? Was she my wife? No. I had conceived an exalted idea of this species of relationship. I had had an immaculate example of it in the case of Emilia. I had been contented in my second marriage to take up with a very imperfect resemblance of this blessedness. But at least I possessed a being of unrivalled beauty, upon whose conjugal affection no creature on earth had a claim but myself. I had a sensitive mind: I had a jealous temper. Could I bear to live in the perpetual presence of a woman, who by the institutions of society was my own, but who, by a law prior and superior to these institutions, was dedicated to another?

If I could, still I could not root out from my memory the fatal information which this letter had communicated to me. I should sit by her side, and for ever recollect, I possess the secret, which, if known to you, would turn

you into stone. You smile now ; you look serene ; you half forget the deep scar which is trenched in your breast ; you think yourself innocent, and exemplary in the discharge of your duties. But this is not so. All the duties you perform to me, are in reality due to the first lord of your affections. Your life is a perpetual cheat ; and I, with the knowledge that it is so, must be contented, must think myself too happy that the deception can still be carried on, must enact day after day, as long as the delusion can be preserved, the part of the loving, the affectionate, the satisfied husband. Surely all the torments of hell cannot equal the eternal repetition of this mummery.

And yet, for the sake of the miserable victim, I must take care to keep her for ever in ignorance. Though he lived in the same world, the same country, nay, the same street, if she knew it not, to her he did not live. I

must therefore be the person, to build up the wall that should hide from her this tremendous secret. I must take care that William did not approach her, that no letter from him reached her, that even the babbling wind did not repeat the tidings. Poor creature ! if it did, what would become of her !

I had a confidential servant ; and to him I was obliged to make an unreserved communication. He already knew something of the history of Margaret, of her intended marriage with the son of lord Borradale, of the cause of its being broken off, and of the miserable loss at sea of the youth to whom she had previously been engaged. Persons of a certain rank in society imagine that they stand at an immense distance from their inferiors, and that nothing is known of their proceedings but just what they are willing should be known. But this is a great error. The menials by whom we are surrounded, take a pride in acquainting them-

selves with our affairs, and regard it as the height of sagacity on their part to penetrate into that which we wish should remain unknown. The servant of one family tells what he observes to the servant of another ; and, from mutual communication of their remarks, they strike out a light which illustrates the innermost depths of our concerns. But Thomas, the servant of whom I speak, was excited, not merely from an unhallowed curiosity, but from the strong interest he felt in my welfare, to observe with sagacity, and to treasure up the fruits of his observation. I found that I had little more to communicate to him but this last information, which had just reached me, and which was so wide from all anticipation.

I charged then this faithful fellow to take with all expedition the road to Brighthelmstone, and to hold himself on the alert, if by possibility any thing should occur on his way, that

might afford him a clue on the subject of his commission. Though William had not mentioned the name of the vessel that brought him to England, it would not probably be difficult for Thomas, when on the spot, to make out something respecting it. He might also pick up some knowledge respecting the passengers, and by possibility might learn the route that William pursued. I instructed him in that case to follow in the track of him by whom the fatal letter had been written. It had reached me in three days from the date which it bore ; and, as I had not suffered the smallest delay to interpose, it might still be conceived that Thomas would not be too late. The newly arrived would find neither Margaret nor her parents at the place from which they had last addressed him. The enquiries which would be required to enable him further to pursue his search, might be supposed to take up some time. If he first lighted upon the parents of

Margaret, they would inform him of what had passed in his absence, and would probably have the power at least to prevent his reaching our abode without some previous notice. I intrusted my servant with a letter I wrote, in case of his lighting on the person he sought, in which I shortly informed him of what had occurred in his absence. I told him, that, his epistle having reached my house in the absence of Margaret, I had used the precaution to open it. I observed, that not the smallest doubt had been entertained by any one, that he had perished at the time when the ship foundered, and that the years which had elapsed since seemed to preclude the possibility of his having survived the catastrophe. Margaret, I added, had long mourned his loss; and it had almost been thought that she would have followed him to his supposed grave. At length, when all conception of his return seemed to have perished, she, though in a state of great sorrow and deep

mental depression, had consented to accept the offer of my hand ; while I on my part had made every exertion to soothe her grief, and restore her to some degree of tranquillity. I stated, that I felt perfectly how bitter must be his disappointment, in being thus precluded for ever from the possession of her to whom his affections had been so ardently devoted ; but I observed, that the evil was now past all remedy, and that it was therefore the duty of one in his unfortunate situation, to endure his calamity with fortitude and a manly spirit. I adjured him above all things not to destroy the last hope of serenity and quiet in the breast of her whom he so inexpressibly valued. It was absolutely necessary, under the present circumstances, that the fact of his having survived should be carefully hid from her ; and I felt confident that he would never adopt the ruinous step of obtruding himself into her presence.

The success of the expedition of my servant was small. He learned the name of the ship that had brought over William to England ; but he learned no more.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the mean while, during the journey of Thomas to Brighthelmstone, and for some time after his return, I remained in a state of the most cruel trepidation. No further intelligence reached me. The period of Margaret's visit to her parents terminated; and she returned home. I was agonised during the latter part of her stay with the doubt whether William might not discover the place of her father's present abode, and so by possibility encounter my wife without her having received even the smallest previous notice that he was alive. But what could I do? In two days from the receipt of the letter of fatal tidings

would come the time when it was originally proposed she should return home. Two days—nay, a single hour,—might be pregnant with irremediable mischief.

The time however was short ; the period which had elapsed between the date of his letter and the day in which it reached me had probably been enough, if he had made all expedition, and no obstacles had intervened to retard his journey. Meanwhile I flattered myself that nothing had yet occurred of the kind of which I had the most terrible apprehension ; and I therefore suffered her visit to proceed to its appointed termination. It will easily be imagined what were my sensations during this terrible suspense.

Margaret returned home ; and I met her at the entrance of my abode. I looked in her face, and easily saw that nothing remarkable, nothing fatal, had occurred to her. She encountered me with smiles, smiles which seemed

to say how much she was gratified to meet again in peace him, whom the law had made the partner of her life. Those smiles cut me to the heart. I said to myself internally, Poor creature, you smile now, because you are unconscious of what has really occurred. You are tranquil; but yours is the tranquillity of ignorance. The arrow is already in your heart; the poison is in your veins, which will drink up in you the very springs of life.

There was no day in which William might not make his appearance. If he shewed himself at the residence of her father, *he* assuredly would not fail to communicate with me on the subject. But I heard nothing. I knew not what precautions to adopt. I remained perpetually on the alert. Whether at home or abroad, I gave strict charge to the servant whom I had dispatched to Brighthelmstone, to be for ever on the watch, to prevent by every possible means the access of William to my

wife, or the delivery of any suspicious communication, and to put into the hands of the stranger, by the first opportunity, the letter he had carried with him in his journey, and which, failing to meet the person to whom it was addressed, he had brought back again.

But, though I had employed all the precautions in my power, I nevertheless felt that all might be insufficient. Every morning that I rose, every hour that elapsed in the livelong day, an event might happen that would baffle all my foresight. I remained, as much as possible, at home. If I were alone, my mind was filled with gloomy anticipations. I was like a man, launched without a companion in a frail bark, totally unprepared to endure the slightest assault of a storm, who had already lost sight of land, and discovered nothing but a boundless expanse of water on every side, but whose attention was caught by a black cloud just rising in the horizon, which darken-

ed and enlarged itself from moment to moment, and appeared to make his destruction indubitable.

But it was necessary that I should spend many hours of every day in company with Margaret. Such had been the habit of my married life, both heretofore, and in the present instance; and it would have been suspicious and inhuman in me to break it. Here it was also requisite that I should personate indifference and serenity. I looked in the countenance of Margaret. Sometimes I observed in it short gleams of cheerfulness, self-satisfaction and gaiety. Her mind then became momentarily absorbed in the trifling concerns of the day, in the management of her household affairs, perhaps in a wife-like way catering for the gratification of my appetite. At other times an occasional cloud of seriousness and melancholy would come over her. In all these cases it never failed to occur to me, how soon

may that cheerfulness be dashed to the earth, how speedily may that composure and indifference be dissipated, or how shortly that sadness swallowed up in a more tremendous anguish, the agony of intolerable remorse, or the abysses of despair !

I spoke to her of things of small importance, the arrangements of our garden, or the succession of the seasons. I related the anecdotes of the neighbourhood, and the news of the day. I tenderly enquired of her health, recommended precautions for its preservation, or poured out my soul in the words of affection, and all the sympathy of a lover.

I could not however continue in this scene for ever. When I had strained my powers of self-command to the utmost, when my heart-strings seemed ready to crack with the exertion, I would ever and anon burst suddenly away from my companion, hasten to the garden, and, as soon as I was out of sight, endeavour to

recover myself from the tension to which I had been subjected, by a sort of antagonist exertion. My limbs had been bound down, my features composed, my voice compulsively softened to soothing and encouraging accents ; and now in revenge I assumed all the violence and contortions of a madman, I stamped with my feet, I spread my arms with wildness and ferocity, and roared like a savage beast, who has just escaped from the toils that controlled him. I found ease in these strange ebullitions of an agonising mind. And, when I came in again, having exhausted myself in these paroxysms of anguish, and endeavoured to recompose myself, poor Margaret, suspecting nothing, would remark nothing extraordinary, and thus favoured my resuming the same tones of indifference or gentleness, as if all had been well, and the earth in reality did not shake and tremble under our feet.

CHAPTER VII.

I HAD no sooner entered into a matrimonial engagement with Margaret, than I settled a handsome annual addition to the revenues of her parents, and prevailed on them to quit their humble residence on the banks of the Severn, and remove to a more commodious abode in the next county to me, and only thirty miles from the mansion of my ancestors. This was the reason why the letter of William, directed to Margaret at the place where he had known her, had been forwarded to me, which would otherwise have been conveyed to her at her father's house, to whom she was at that time on a visit.

William was not long before he followed his letter in person. He repaired to the well-known roof, and found the cottage in the possession of another family, to whom he was a stranger. He might have enquired out and encountered some of the families who had been the associates of his youth ; but he was not in a frame of mind to desire this superfluity. He might have desired to learn from the present inhabitants of the cottage some particulars respecting his mistress ; but they could supply him with nothing except merely Borradales address, which they had taken in charge to communicate to any one that sought it. William was therefore too impatient to find his friends, and once more to bless his longing eyes with the sight of her he loved, not to proceed with all practicable speed to the point towards which his course was directed.

He met Borradales at a small distance from the door of the house, which he had just quitted.

In this short interval the visit of Margaret had terminated, and she was, as I have already said, again under the protection of her husband.

The old man felt a strange sensation at sight of the stranger that approached him. His impression was first that of imperfect recollection. I have seen this man somewhere before.

Mr. Borradale; my old friend! said William.

Whom do you seek? who are you? replied the other. Indeed I do not know you.—A fearful, undefinable feeling, a sort of shuddering, not unmixed with horror, came over the old man.—No; you cannot be my once-loved, rustic neighbour. Time and events forbid that. I witnessed the waves of the tempestuous sea close over *his* head, and bury him in its unknown deeps.

I am William. Did you not write to me, and invite me to return? Years have passed since; but they have made no alteration in my sentiments.—Where is Margaret? I am im-

patient to see her. Every moment is an age to me. I trust she has not suffered so much as I have suffered. But that is all over now. I am come to the season of peace, the recompense of every toil.

Let me look at you. No, it is not; yes, it is, our kind, warm-hearted neighbour. How you are altered ! Trust me, I am delighted to see you again. But how has it happened ? So sure as we were that we had lost you for ever ! I long to hear all that has befallen you in absence.—The old man said this, because he was desirous to put off the evil hour, and to think of any thing, rather than of the disappointment, the embarrassment, the agony, that would attend this unlooked for event. Men succeed each other in the scene of human life, even as one wave on the shore rolls over and carries away another ; the place occupied by each man is speedily filled up ; the gap closes ; and he, who after a while should return to us from the

dead, would find that he was an intruder, that there was no room for him amidst the relations of life, or in the division of the manifold productions of earth.

Borradales led the late-returned wanderer into the house. He said to his wife, Here is poor William, returned after all his misfortunes, restored from the grave. William saluted her.

He looked round with a wistful gaze, but without finding the thing he sought. He fixed his eyes on the door of the next apartment.

Where is my love ? he said. Is she at home ? Is she well ?

She is very well, replied the mother. No, she is not at home.

The Borradales had a painful duty to perform. They told William that Margaret was not at home, that she had been with them lately, but that she was gone.

The mother then tried to change the discourse. Well, she said, but where have you

been? Why did you stay away so long? Why did not you write? How did you escape the shipwreck in which so many persons saw you perish?

William was too impatient, to suffer himself to be drawn to any other topic than that on which his soul was bent, or to answer these questions.

It is no matter, said he, what has happened to me. Do not let us talk about that. It is Margaret I want to hear of. If she is not here, at least tell me about her. How has she been? How did she support herself? Oh, I am sure, wherever she is, she is as eager once again to see her William, as I am dying to behold her, to embrace her, to hold her in my longing arms, to be assured that I have her in security, that we meet, never, never again to be separated.

Borradale caught William by the arm, with a solemn, a mournful countenance.

The truth must be told, said he. Prepare to

hear. Call up your courage. Margaret can never be yours.

William staggered to a chair. His countenance betokened the wildest emotion. She is dead ! said he.

She is not dead. She is married. What could we do ? We waited for you month after month, and year after year. I thought she would have sunk beneath her calamity. There was no spirit left in her. Despair was written in all her features. Nothing could rouse her. She is married: but, oh, with how little of the feelings of a bride ! When she took the hand of her husband, she thought solely of you. We believed you dead. We urged, we importuned her to engage in some new scene of life, as the only thing that could save her from destruction.

Borradale might have gone on talking as long as he pleased. One word, one little word, transfixed his hearer—had had the power to

turn him into a block of marble. His faculties were withered; his features were fixed; his senses were gone. It was long before his powers rekindled. It seemed as if this one word had put an end to his being.

Perhaps no human creature, in the endless variety of sublunary events, had ever undergone so severe a trial. William had passed through countless adversities, "in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness," in imprisonment and slavery. One thing sustained him. He saw the countenance of Margaret shining through the bars of his confinement; he saw her by day and by night; he consoled himself amidst the evils that surrounded him by the thought of her afar off; he looked, with a hope never to be defeated, to her, as the goal of his race, and the reward of his labours. The compulsory and still varied distance that was ever interposed between them, the uncertain length of the period that held them apart, had no other

effect, than to make him love her a thousand times the more.

His was no vague hope, no shade of that self-flattery, which makes the lover so often interpret in his own favour a smile of seeming encouragement, a momentary gesture of regard, one of those thrilling, sweet, seductive, undecipherable tones of the female voice, with which an adorable, light-hearted beauty has so often been known to lead on her unwary admirer into a fool's paradise. He had been solemnly recalled from a remote part of the globe; every thing had been arranged; the most sacred pledge had been given by the parents and their daughter.

He sank at once, as it seemed, into annihilation. His eyes were fixed. His lips were severed. He gasped for breath. His limbs were unable to support him. He staggered to a seat. He remained incapable of exertion, incapable of thought.

The old people became frightened. They did every thing they could devise, to soothe and to restore him. For a long time he seemed insensible of their assiduities. At length he awoke as from a trance, and recovered the power of articulate speech.

Where is Margaret ? he frantically cried. Tell me where I am to find her ! She is mine. All the powers of earth and heaven shall not tear her from me. It is the first of necessities that I should see her. I must pour out my soul before her. I must tell her what she has done, and what she ought to have done. Oh, let me look on that face ! I will see how falshood sits on that countenance, and beams from those eyes. Can she be false ? Oh, then never thing was true ! There is nothing sacred, nothing to be relied on ; the earth has no centre ; and the broad and all-inclosing firmament is built on a spider's web. No ; no lips but her own shall ever persuade me that this is the end of all. I

must learn my fate from the surest of oracles, and from none else.

As he spoke this, he started from his place, and was about to leave the cottage. The mother of Margaret threw herself before him, and grasped his legs. There was no time to be lost. If he escaped them in this frame of mind, the most tragic consequences were to be feared. It was necessary to soothe him, to bring him back to reason, now before he left the spot.

William, said the mother, hear me ! I am the mother of Margaret. Do you not trace her lineaments in this face ? It was I that nursed and reared her through all the feebleness and perils of infancy. I have always been your friend. I have no purpose but your welfare, and that of my only child. I feel for you from the bottom of my heart. You have indeed been most barbarously treated. We have done wrong. We are without excuse. You ought to have been

waited for. Nothing less than the sight of your dead body, or a minute and authentic account of your death and funeral, could have justified us in the invasion of your rights.

Yet, let me adjure you, my son (such I will still call you), to consider what you do, and not uselessly to destroy the tranquillity of her, whom you have loved above all human creatures. The course of events can never be arrested; that which happened but a week ago can no more be recalled, than the deeds over which a thousand years have passed. Margaret is married. The most sacred rites of religion have devoted her to another. Our affair is not with things we cannot recal, but with the things to come. You have ever been the sweetest, the kindest, the purest of human beings. We have always looked to you for blessings, for bounty, for every thing that is good and compassionate. Bitterness could never flow from so clear and refreshing a

spring : you cannot change your nature. We have always thought of you with affection and sympathy. Your supposed death was the greatest calamity Margaret and I ever experienced. No ; those hands, which have ever called down blessings on us, can never cause us to fear, to question what misery they will next inflict.

The spirit of William was stirred within him at this expostulation. Mother, said he, I will do my best. Do not fear me. I will return to you. But I must be alone. I must go round through all my thoughts, must penetrate the chaos within me, and endeavour to find out what I am, and what I shall be.

The mother dared not to interfere further. William left the cottage, and resorted to a neighbouring wood. Alternately, as I learned afterwards, he resolved to sacrifice himself. His case was hopeless. He had no place among the sons of men. Why then should he shew himself, involved as he was in an atmo-

sphere of pestilence, to wither and poison the well being of others? Presently he felt however, that thus to proceed was beyond his strength. The grief that fermented within him must have vent, must break down its barriers, and make its power be known. Why should he suffer alone? What had he done to deserve that this insupportable weight of despair should be accumulated on him?

By degrees he began to fall into a more orderly arrangement of his thoughts. He would not seek to inflict mischief on others; but he must procure for himself the satisfaction of beholding the turrets of the house that was the dwelling of Margaret, of observing the trees that shaded her, and the walks that were occasionally blessed with her footsteps.

Heaven is there,
Where Margaret lives; and every cat, and dog,
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Lives there in heaven, and may look upon her.

To see even the smoke that ascended in curling

wreaths above her roof, would be a relief to him. To have the chance of beholding the carriage in which she went out to take the air, would be gratification unspeakable. He knew that this was nothing. He must in time master himself, gather up the fragments of the wreck of what he had been, and see to what account they could be turned. But this momentary indulgence would soothe, and so strengthen him. It was unreasonable to expect that the thousand cords that bound him could be snapped at once, that so terrible a disappointment could be conquered in an instant.

In pursuance of this determination he proceeded to the neighbourhood of my dwelling. He did not return to Borradale's ; but enquired of a neighbour the name of his son-in-law. That intelligence was speedily obtained. He approached the place of my abode. He took up his residence at the nearest town. The distance was four or five miles. He found a

cottage that was less than two miles from me. There was a wood between, shut in on one side by a clear, murmuring brook, with a little bridge leading to the meadow beyond. From day to day he came to the cottage, and wandered in this wood. He made acquaintance with the old woman of the cottage, and her daughters ; he asked a thousand particulars relative to the occupiers of the neighbouring mansion. He fed his discontented spirit with such intelligence as he could collect. He ascended a neighbouring brow, which commanded a view of my house and grounds. From this point he could discern my gardens and the persons who walked in them. He saw the labourers employed in cultivating them ; he saw me ; he saw Margaret. He filled his mind with bitterness and despair, with imagining all that had once invited his acceptance, and the cup of beatitude that had been dashed from his lips, till he could no longer endure the concep-

tion of what he was. He then fled from the spot, while the fiend of memory pursued him wherever he went; and he returned the next day, to be made more wretched, and filled top-full of the direst misery.

The Borradales, finding that he did not return to them as he had promised, ruminated anxiously on the question what step he would next proceed to take. They concluded that they could not do less than advertise me of the visit he had paid them, and then leave it for me to judge in what manner I might be able to prevent the mischief that threatened me. This precaution on their part was well intended; but it had no other effect than to heighten my alarm, and increase the weight of my misery.

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CHAPTER VIII.

IN a rural neighbourhood like that in which I dwelt, the arrival of a solitary stranger such as William did not pass altogether unnoticed. As he wandered about among the fields, the vallies, and the roads, without any discoverable object, various comments were passed on this new phenomenon. A lady, who was on a visit at a few miles distance, who had seen Margaret, and knew something of her history, felt her curiosity excited. She was fortunate enough so far as curiosity was concerned, in one instance to pass near the stranger, so as to make her observations. She saw in him great appearance of dejection, a wild and unsettled air,

and other tokens favourable to her conjecture, that this might be the former lover of Margaret, who was supposed to have been shipwrecked, but respecting whose fate she knew that no particulars had ever been obtained. As William passed her in an opposite direction, she hastened to the cottage, which, as she had been informed, the stranger had frequently chosen as a place to which he resorted, and where he had been known to remain for an hour together. She entered into conversation with the cottagers, asked a multitude of questions respecting the individual who had excited her attention, and learned that one of the principal topics of his conversation was respecting the inmates of the mansion, of whom they were humble dependents. The lady led them in her own train of thinking, and awakened in them recollections which might otherwise have slumbered. They confessed, that the stranger had an extremely dejected and disconsolate air, that

they could not account for his having apparently made this spot the centre of his peregrinations, and that he had very much the manner of a man recently arrived from abroad. Persons, who are afflicted with this disease of curiosity, will often be found to have a sort of intuitive faculty, which, though it will sometimes lead them on in a train of conjectures singularly absurd and in a manner impossible, will nevertheless occasionally, as by a sort of felicity, suggest to them inferences, built on very slight grounds, but which nevertheless turn out to be precisely correspondent to the reality of things.

The lady in question could not divest herself of the persuasion, that the person she had seen was no other than William, the former lover of Margaret, but who was supposed to have been long dead. She said to herself, I am sure it is so: but, with all this confidence in her own penetration, she had a latent feeling of doubt,

and was on thorns till she could arrive at the state of making assurance doubly sure. As has been observed, she had seen Margaret once or twice, and could use that as the pretence for making her a visit. The lady had no malice in her nature. She would have started at the bare thought of inflicting on any one a serious injury. But she believed she would somehow be able to gain new evidence to the truth of the subtle discovery she had made, without the danger of serious mischief. And, at any rate, the noble passion of disinterested investigation that inspired her, the desire to add one proposition more to the glorious aggregate of truth, was to her superior to all other considerations.

She accordingly hastened to put her project in execution. She drove to my house. I knew the carriage, and was aware of the visit ; but I knew the frivolity of the lady's character, and conceived that, if Margaret chose to receive her, she could not have a more innocent re-

creation. Visitors only occasionally made their appearance at our door ; and the lady was admitted.

The conversation began with the topics usual on such occasions. The stranger next changed the subject to the series of tempestuous weather that had prevailed not long ago, and the mischief it had done among the shipping.—Margaret felt uneasy : the subject touched on a string which always awoke painful sensations in her mind.

Her communicative friend however seemed to take no notice of this. She went on : Oh, I heard such a story of a shipwreck yesterday ! It is too terrible to think about it.—Margaret writhed under the prelude ; but she was in too weak a state of spirits to be able to resist the torrent. The speaker therefore went on to describe the splitting upon a rock, the guns of distress that were fired, the leak, the yawning breach that the violence of the sea had effected,

the agony and despair of the passengers, the ineffectual attempts that were made to approach to their assistance, and the final swallowing up of the vessel in the devouring waves. Three hundred souls perished : only ten were saved by a sort of miracle.

Margaret long endured the tale ; for she did not feel in herself the strength to interpose and subdue the volubility of the person who addressed her. When at length the narrator came to a pause, Margaret turned towards her with a solemn and melancholy aspect.

I thought, my dear madam, that you had known something of my unfortunate story. But, as you convince me by your mode of proceeding that you are uninformed, I will for once deviate from the rule I had laid to myself, and touch a little upon the brink of it. I am no coward ; but I have been endeavouring for years to accommodate myself to my circumstances. I did not come, without preceding

sufferings and distress, into the connection and the duties that now control me. I had a juvenile attachment, before I knew Deloraine. The partiality I conceived was early and deep ; and it was death only that dissolved it. The idol of my youth perished in a scene such as you have described. An inscrutable Providence directs the fortunes of mortals ; and it is incumbent on us to submit without murmuring, and to devote ourselves to a just and exemplary conduct in the relations in which we shall ultimately be placed. I have therefore held it for a principle to indulge in no vain repinings, to forget the visions, the joys and the aspirations of my dawn of life, and to banish from my memory what can never be recovered. With much perseverance I have done what I could to heal the wounds that past time inflicted on me : and, if you had been aware of what I have now communicated, I think you would have refrained from a topic so agonising to me.

May I request that you would touch on it no more ?

The appeal of Margaret was of the most impressive nature. But there is a class of persons whose souls are essentially non-conductors to the electricity of sentiment, and whose minds seem to be filled with their own train of thinking, convictions and purposes, to the exclusion of every thing else. I know a man incorrigibly deaf, who yet gives himself the air of discussing with and answering you, who professes to know exactly what you must have alleged, goes on replying to your imaginary objections, and will talk of things immeasurably wide of and contrary to the topics of your discourse, without the slightest suspicion of the ludicrous cross-readings he is presenting. Like this man are the persons I speak of. The ear of the mind is as completely blocked up in them, as are his bodily organs. Of this class of persons was the visitor of Margaret.

But, my dear madam, said she, are you certain that he you were so much attached to is dead? I beg your pardon. I would not be impertinent for the world. But I have heard many stories in my time of miraculous escapes. The body of him you so deeply lamented, I believe, was never found. He was observed under circumstances most perilous and critical; and he has never been heard of since. I conceive that is all.

Margaret was agitated in the most alarming way by the discourse of her unwelcome visitor.

Oh, God, she exclaimed, what would I have given that he had lived! But I saw the vessel swallowed up by the remorseless sea. I saw the persons who escaped in the long-boat: he was not among them. I heard the particulars of the accident by which he was thrown into the sea, and so perished. What days and nights, what months and years of inextinguishable sorrow have I suffered since that hour!

The miracle is that I live. I am astonished at myself. Surely, surely, I must have been made of adamant, and my frame constructed of materials that no grief could destroy. Why am I not in my grave ! Why does this throbbing brain continue its functions ! Oh, that I were dead at once ! Oh, that I had never been born ! that the day of my birth had been swallowed up in darkness, that the shadow of death might stain it, and that it might never be numbered among the days of the year ! God, my Saviour, why am I thus ? What have I done, that I should be singled out for calamity above all the daughters of men ?

The train of ideas that her visitor had awakened, the deep wounds that she reopened in the heart of Margaret, had the effect, that every thing that had passed, the various circumstances and events that had occurred, since she witnessed the fatal catastrophe from the brow at Plymouth, were utterly annihilated.

She stood once more on the tragic spot; she saw in the most vivid manner the whole picture, all the particulars and the turmoil of the scene, which had then transfixed her with despair. She sank motionless in her place, overwhelmed and convulsed as in a struggle between life and death.

I beg your pardon, madam, said the other. I thought I ought to tell you, that I have some reason to believe that yesterday I saw the person we were speaking of. But I perceive that you are not in a fit state to listen to me. I will withdraw. I will send your servant to you.

And she left the room.

Margaret was discovered by her attendant in a state of insensibility. She had fainted away with the excess of her emotions. The lady flew down into the hall, having first said a few words respecting the condition in which she had left Margaret. She found her servants in

readiness, and drove off without an instant's delay.

I heard the sound of her chariot-wheels in departing, and observed in her no ordinary tokens of hurry and confusion. The next minute I was summoned to my wife, whom the attendants had conveyed to her chamber, and placed upon the bed. I was exceedingly alarmed at her appearance. She was without colour, and without pulse. She remained as in a swoon for nearly an hour, notwithstanding all the remedies that could be applied. I dispatched my valet in haste to call in medical assistance. He met the physician that usually attended my family on the road, and brought him to my house in a shorter time than could have been expected.

I did not discover what had passed between Margaret and her visitor till a considerable time afterwards. It was very slowly that the afflicted one recovered her recollection. She was like a person in whom a sudden invasion

of disease had paralysed the organs of speech. She spoke not; though it was easy for me to perceive the gradations by which her faculties returned to her. Her eyes were generally fixed on vacancy: but from time to time they wandered restlessly about the apartment, as if in search of something which they never found. It is impossible for the imagination to figure to itself such an expression of despair. It seemed as if rocks and stones would have moved, and hungry tigers been excited to remorse at so mournful a spectacle.

For myself, I was launched into a sea of conjectures, as to what it was that had caused the tokens and indications before me. What was it that this contemptible visitor had done or had said, that produced so utter a revolution in this admirable creature? I was acquainted with a miserable secret, which was scarcely known to any other human being. I had for many days devoted all my energies to the per-

petuating the blessed ignorance, in the continuance of which the life of Margaret was bound up. I anticipated every day the arrival of William, or of a letter from his hand. Was there a possibility that he had chosen this foolish and ridiculous woman to be his ambassador?

I could not believe it. Still the question remained, Did Margaret, or did she not know that which I was so anxious to conceal from her? I gazed on her with undescribable intenseness. With the lynx-eyed fervour of my gaze I sought to penetrate into her soul; I endeavoured in the doubtful regions, the lines and changes of her countenance to read her thoughts. The wife of king George the Second died of a disease she never would reveal. How earnestly I desired to see the soul of Margaret in all its nakedness, and discover the hidden mischief that was corroding her vitals! I could almost have adopted the determination of Ma-

homet the Second, who is said to have pierced into the bowels of his pages at the expence of their lives, to discover what was become of some fruit that had disappeared.

But no; it was impossible that Margaret had received the fatal information. The woman, who had just left my house, could not be the confident and the factor of the miserable wretch who had just returned to his native shores. Margaret was tremblingly alive at every pore. A thousand follies and indiscretions, a thousand impertinences and matters of thoughtless discourse from such a woman, might have given to her a shock of a very painful nature.—But yet Margaret had a fund of philosophy and stoicism, and what was better, of good sense. It was difficult to conceive how a mere impertinence could have produced in her so total a revolution.

The question as to what had passed, and whether the thing I feared had been in any

way revealed to her, was of the last importance. If the symptoms I observed had been produced by any impertinence or insult, however unimaginable, the first shock would be the worst of the affair, and the mischief might be expected gradually to die away and disappear. But, if Margaret had actually learned the existence of her former lover, I was convinced that a fatal blow had been struck, from which she would never recover. The more she reflected upon it, the worse it would appear to her. Here was the poor fellow, the sufferer from a thousand calamities, bereaved of that reward, which in his eye would have atoned for every thing, and cast forth, like Cain, a friendless, hopeless wanderer through the world. And she, even she, by her levity, her want of deep thinking, and of a feeling sufficiently intense, was the cause of this.

The next day after that of this shock, whatever it was, which Margaret had sustained,

Thomas, my confidential servant, presented himself before me. He brought me very interesting intelligence. He expressed an opinion that he had found the person whom I had sent him to the coast of Sussex in search of. Thomas had endeavoured with the utmost diligence to discharge the function I had devolved on him. He appeared in a considerable degree to have followed in the steps of the lady, whom curiosity alone had goaded in her enquiries and observations. He had at first lighted on the stranger whom he remarked wandering with disordered steps about the neighbourhood. There was something about his carriage and air, which suggested to Thomas at the second glance, that this person little resembled the untaught and homebred rustics, unacquainted with the manners and cities of men, and that he seemed as if engrossed and swallowed up with some heartfelt grief. Thomas traced him to the cottage, and took an opportunity, when

he was absent, to make some enquiries of the peasants about him. He found from them, that this stranger had been several days in the neighbourhood, that he had three or four times taken an occasion to talk to the cottagers, and that what seemed most to interest him was any particulars he could glean respecting the inmates of the mansion below. Thomas did not like to proceed further without fresh instructions from me. Should he take for granted upon these vague indications that this was the person to whom his commission pointed? Such a letter as I had intrusted him with, was not to be put into any one's hands without the surest grounds. Should he ask the stranger his name? If he were the individual we apprehended, it was not likely that he would give a true answer to a questioner he had never before seen.

In the mean time Margaret, when she had sufficiently recovered her self-possession, re-

called to mind, as well as she was able, the particulars which had passed between her and her unwelcome visitor. The last words of this inquisitive lady had been, "I have reason to think that yesterday I saw the person we were speaking of." But, when they were uttered, Margaret was in such a state of agitation and disturbance, that she could scarcely be said to have heard them. It was not till after a certain period spent in rumination and uncertainty, that they shaped themselves into a proposition, and seemed to affirm something. Was this really what the lady said? Might not the sense of what was spoken be the pure fruit of Margaret's imagination? Guilt is cunning in devising the means of its own requital. And, if Margaret was guilty, how complicated was her guilt? How tremendous would her punishment be? The bare suspicion that she had heard aright, was almost too terrible for her to sustain, and live.

CHAPTER IX.

It happened that, on the very day of the intelligence I had received from Thomas, I was compelled to leave my home upon a business of importance relative to one of my neighbours, that could no way be dispensed with. For weeks before, I had scarcely quitted my dwelling, or been one entire hour out of the sight of my wife. This sort of confinement could not be supported for ever. But I persuaded myself that the crisis that gave birth to it, must be of brief duration. For the sake of every one, of me, his mistress and himself, it was necessary that William should go once more into a state of voluntary banishment. I was willing to

make any sacrifice, as far as money was concerned, to procure him an eligible destiny. This was no more than he was amply entitled to from my hands; and the peace of all the parties concerned imperiously prescribed it. It seemed to be the most desirable mode for accomplishing my purpose, that I should myself have an interview with William, should urge the necessity of his compliance upon him with a power of conviction that no other person could attain to, and answer his objections, and remove his difficulties, if any presented themselves. But this was a matter of exceeding delicacy, and that required the utmost previous consideration and meditation. It was true that I had reason to think he was in my neighbourhood. Yet to encounter him would probably be a question of some difficulty. He would scarcely be to be found at the moment that I wished to see him.

It was with the utmost reluctance that I set

out on my journey. I had a presentiment that something of the most disastrous import would occur in my absence. I felt inclined, instead of going forth on the business that called me, to send an excuse. But of this thought I presently grew ashamed. It had ever been a principle with me, to pursue on all occasions the straight line of my duty, and, yielding to what that required of me, to leave the rest to the disposal of heaven. My mind indeed misgave me; but I “defied augury.”

I however determined in my way to call at the cottage to which Thomas directed me. The information I obtained there was much the same as that which he had already communicated. The persons to whom I addressed myself informed me, that the stranger had spoken with them again and again, that he had been with them that morning, and that it was probable that in a few days he would repeat his visit. I said no more. I wrote two or three

lines with a pencil as I sat in my carriage, and requested the good woman, when she saw the person again, to put them into his hand. Their purport was simply to solicit an interview with him on the third day from the present, at two o'clock, at the little bridge across the brook, which has been already mentioned. If this appointment, from being received too late, or from any other cause failed, I begged the individual I addressed, to favour me with a fresh rendezvous on the same spot, and to leave his answer with the person from whom he should receive my billet. I signed my paper with my name. I felt considerably uncertain whether the stranger were actually he whom I had in contemplation, and was for that and other reasons reluctant to open myself further on paper. But, whether I was right, or was mistaken, no great mischief could arise from a simple rendezvous, which, if erroneous, might

easily be confessed to be so, and apologised for accordingly.

Having adopted this precautionary measure, I proceeded on my journey. Nothing that deserves to be mentioned, occurred in my execution of the business that had called me. When I set out upon my return, I had discharged myself of all other thoughts, and of the petty intricacies of vulgar business, in which I had been compelled to take a part; and my mind was left free to meditate, even to bursting, upon the question that involved my condition and my future existence, together with the welfare of Margaret, the sanity of her intellect, and very probably her approaching destruction.

The sorrows of William were terrible, and hard to be endured: but, in the light in which they presented themselves to my mind, they were as nothing compared with what was to be gone through by Margaret and myself. He

had lost a mistress, that he loved above all the world. This was a misfortune that has been to be borne by many in all ages of mankind. It is true, that his disappointment had various aggravations. After having gone through a severe ordeal, he had been summoned from the other side of the globe to receive his reward. Since that time he had experienced a multitude of distressful vicissitudes: but there remained, as he most assuredly believed, the crown of his rejoicing, secured to him by the solemn engagement of the being he adored, and her parents. And yet, lo, now, all this crumbled away from his grasp, and had disappointed him! What then? She might have died. This is among the commonest of human occurrences. And he was left in no worse a situation than if she had died. He had the world before him, to settle himself as he pleased. He was bound to nothing, free as the air. He was like our first parents: "Of all the trees of the garden

ye may freely eat; but of a certain tree ye may not eat:" one thing only was interdicted him.

But what was the situation of Margaret? If she knew, or at the moment she should come to know, of the existence of William, that he had been in her neighbourhood, that from the adjoining knoll he had seen her walking in the garden, that he had observed her attitudes and motions, and counted her steps, she would then deeply feel, that there lived a man who had had a right to her hand, to her attentions, to the very pulses of her soul, beyond all creatures that existed. What had she done? She had married. But her marriage was one of mere convenience and decency. She thought well of me: no more! But could this contract come in competition with the claims, both from qualities, from that tenderness which only one creature in the universe can feel for one, from that entire and perfect union of souls, which had subsisted between her and William? Could

that justify a breach of the most solemn engagements, the violation of a faith, which ought never to have been disregarded, so long as there remained the possibility that William lived? And what was she to me so long as he existed? An adultress :

..... a false fair one,
Who plighted to a noble youth her faith,

and then profaned the most sacred solemnities that religion could supply, by giving her hand to another.

This was her situation, so far as William was concerned. But there were bonds into which she had entered with me. Before the altar, in the house of God himself, and under the eye of the Omniscient, she had vowed to be mine, to adhere to me, “for richer, for poorer, in sickness and health, to love, cherish and obey,” till death should finally dissolve the tie between us. And this, while her heart, her whole heart—who can control the pulses of

the heart?—was another's; while she loathed the engagement that bound her, and while the voice, the reproachful voice, of never-sleeping conscience upbraided her for the guilt she had contracted by consenting to that engagement. It was impossible she could have one day of tranquillity and peace, her duties, according to the general code of all civilized nations, drawing her one way, and an obligation, anterior to and of elder birth than these duties, drawing her another. She must wither like a flower, when all moisture has been drawn away from the soil in which it is planted, and that which should nourish it is turned into dust. She must die, even as that flower would die, when a wind carrying pestilence in its wings had passed over it, or the locusts of the south had spread themselves upon its leaves. Nothing could cure the mortal wound she had received. If William were to perish even now, she could never more forget the charge of disloyalty she

had incurred, the baseness of her proceeding in giving away to another, that which, by the first of all laws, the law of the heart, was his, and his alone.

Such would be the situation of Margaret, from the instant she should be truly informed on the subject. But what was mine? I could only understand that of William or Margaret by the force of imagination, putting myself, imperfectly as I might, in their place and endeavouring to think their thoughts. But my own spoke to me in a quite different language. It came to me through the voice of an internal monitor which could not deceive me. There the business lay in its true nature; and a crowd of venomous thoughts burst every barrier, and at the tribunal of my immortal spirit gave in their evidence, in terms every word of which scorched up my vitals.

I had consented (fool that I was!) to be the husband of a woman, whose soul I well knew

had once been devoted to another in a degree that had never been surpassed in the records of human kind. I so admired the lovely unfortunate whose charms had taken hold on me, that I could endure to be only the second in her esteem. I was like what is related of Bacchus in the heathen mythology, who, when he saw Ariadne, with her attitude and countenance of despair on the desert shore, instantly became enamoured of her, was induced to forget that she had previously been devoted to a mortal lover, and took her to his heart.

This was bad enough; and I had accordingly suffered many grievous pangs, when I was led to perceive by a thousand indications, that I had only her duty, while,

Incapable of change, her fondness lay
Buried with William in his watery grave.

But what was this to the state of my feelings, when I knew that William was actually alive, was in England, was in the vicinity of

the fair one he loved, was wandering about my grounds, and watching for an accidental glimpse of the figure of her for the possession of whom he would willingly have died ! Here was a task, the task of prolonging her enviable ignorance, which I could scarcely endure for an instant, which it might be incumbent upon me to endure for months and years, and which I must think myself too happy if with all my vigilance I could maintain in existence for ever. No ; I felt that this was a task that exceeded my strength. To suffer was one thing. Tantalus and Tityus and Prometheus may be supposed to have strung up their energies to that. But to be perpetually alive to the giving new arms to the torturer, to fling against his own lips the bough loaded with celestial nutriment which he was never to taste, to communicate new powers and ferocity to the vulture that preyed on his vitals, this

exceeded all the fertility of the poets of old in feigning ingenious cruelty.

I first applied my powers to the keeping from Margaret the knowledge of that fatal secret, the bare consciousness of which would perhaps have destroyed her.

My next fear was that this miserable stranger should actually in person present himself before her. To know that he lived, and was not far from her, was misery enough. But it was a very different thing, to see him, to peruse those well-known lineaments, to listen to the sorcery of his accents, to see misery, reproach and despair written in his countenance, to hear his voice upbraiding her faithlessness, and awakening her pity. This it could never be supposed she would be able to sustain.

It was mine then to preserve her from present death, death which might be imagined

to be the result of her knowing that William lived, death which was the result most naturally to be expected, if she saw him again invested in a clothing of flesh and bones, a real man placed before her waking sight. Like Semele, when Jove stood before her in his true and proper form, she must be expected to be blasted and destroyed in an instant.

But there was another thought, which, I am compelled to own, was more intolerable to me than the decease of my much-prized, much-cherished consort. I could conceive myself as bearing to see her dead at my feet. It would be a desperate trial ; it would shrivel up, as it were, the surface and the substance of my heart. But it would leave me, after a time, even as Margaret had found me when I first beheld her. I had been a widower before. Suppose then on the other hand it was reserved for me to see her gazing on the countenance of another with looks of speechless love, fol-

lowing his departing steps with eyes that ran over with tears, or suppose it should be, with fond emotion pressing his hand, and even surrendering herself to what they would call his chaste embrace—no ; to think of that was madness. Death is but death. The truest mourner does but weep and smite his breast over an insensible corpse. But the vision I here speak of is the genuine torment of the damned ; and the most envenomed demons in all the intemperance and drunkenness of their cruelty could contrive nothing beyond it.

No ; I could never bear to know that she loved another living man better than she loved me. To the dead I could yield an ideal preference. They are sacred ; they are thin air, or of a substance more subtle than air ; they neither act upon us, nor are acted upon by us. But that Margaret should be in corporal substance with me, while there was another man, equally corporeal, with whom her mind and

soul tabernacled and lived, leaving me only the empty casket, that I should be regarded as the loathsome obstacle to what she most aspired after, that she dwelt with all she hated, and was absent from the good most precious in her estimation, this was a thought that I could not live with for a moment, and yet that incessantly obtruded upon my contemplations.

Now, at leisure, the agonising leisure to which I am occasionally condemned, I relate all this in order and with method. But it was not so at the time when these thoughts first offered themselves to my distempered spirit. Then all was disorder and wildness and confusion. It was the counterpart of what most men have at some time experienced in a state of delirium. Faces, the faces of maniacs, seemed to grin upon me from among the parting clouds, or through the horrors of the woodland glades. Some of them were faces that I

too well remembered, the faces of those who were most loathsome to my thoughts, and intolerable to my recollections; and some of them were faces more deformed and monstrous than earth ever owned. Alternately they scowled at me with demoniac malice, and then changed their fierceness into a laugh less to be endured than the wrath of hyenas and tigers. If there had been method in this, it would have been less terrible. But it was ever wild and even abrupt. These spirits, if spirits I may call them, came upon me uncertainly from the east and the west, sometimes seemed to start up as out of the ground, and at other times to descend and cower over my head. At one moment they appeared glimmering and scarcely visible; and anon they shewed themselves with frightful clearness floating on the air, or just before me in my path. Nothing was quiet and stationary with them for an in-

stant; and it was this perpetual turmoil and disorder, that gave indescribable keenness to my sensations.

But I will take advantage of the present cessation, Margaret and William being already dead, and I shut up in an unknown and inaccessible corner among the dwellings of men, to analyse somewhat more fully what I felt, and to endeavour to make it intelligible to the reader.

I have been twice married. The first contract I formed of this kind, was surely the most felicitous that ever fell to the lot of mortal man. The union between me and my Emilia was perfect. It occurred in the dawn of my maturity, when I was yet a stranger to misfortune, was almost unacquainted with pain. It was formed in the full vigour of my health and strength; and the arch under which I entered to this triumphant joy, may be said to have been covered with flowers of vivid hue

and of exquisite odour in the utmost exuberance. The hearts of Emilia and myself were set to the same key, tuned to each other. We anticipated each other's desires almost before they were formed. We had no concealments and no reserves. Either party carried a window directly over the region of the heart, so as to make our thoughts transparent; and this entire knowledge, the one of the other, was the consummation of our joy. Surely this was happiness.

Between Margaret and me the case was exceedingly different. I was far from possessing her whole heart, as I had possessed the heart of Emilia. I could therefore scarcely be said to have loved her so much. But I loved her; and that with an overwhelming and devouring sensation. With Emilia I reposed in full security. I loved her, and was satisfied. I was convinced that she was truly mine; and every day I congratulated myself on my lot. But

with Margaret I knew that she was not mine ;
and, though she conducted herself towards me
every hour in a manner the most exemplary, I
was fully aware that we were not like

. the streams of meeting rivers,
Whose blended waters are no more distinguished,
But roll into the sea one common flood.

With Emilia my sense was of full security ;
but with Margaret I was ever restless, discon-
tented, craving. Yet for this reason I might
be said in a very obvious sense to have loved
her a thousand times the more. I was like a
sportsman in the midst of the darkest waters,
the object of whose pursuit is the eel. He is
ever apprehensive that the creature will slide
from his grasp, and for that reason holds it
with a more emphatic pressure. With Emilia
I had arrived at unmingled confidence, that
“perfect love which casteth out fear.” But
with Margaret I never felt secure ; I asked
myself from hour to hour, what is it that now

occupies her thoughts? By a strange perverseness I valued her the more, because I was never the freeholder of her heart, never had the executed lease of her affections. It is thus, that the man only who has just recovered from a dangerous fit of sickness, and apprehends a relapse, is fully alive to the joys of health. It is thus that the man against whom a suit has been instituted for all he is worth in the world, or who has received intelligence that the house is on fire in which he has laid up the acquisitions of a whole life of industry, understands the value of riches. Every time I looked at Margaret, I said, Will she be mine to-morrow in the same degree in which I may now boast of the blessedness of our union? The alabaster fairness of her complexion, the mild resignation of her eye, the sweet courtesies and winning blandness of her voice, were never lost upon me, never passed by me unheeded, for this very reason. I was like the miser in Esop,

who went twenty times a day, and dug up and counted the gold, which lay hid in an obscure corner of the adjoining field, fearing that his motions might be marked by the eye of every passing traveller, and his prize might escape him.

When my passion for Emilia took its rise, I was in the full vigour of health; and, when I formed my acquaintance with Margaret, I was just recovered from a very dangerous illness, and was in the middle point as it were between life and death. This cooperated with many other circumstances, to give to my passion for her a diseased tone and a sickly hue. During the whole period of our married life my mind was never robust and steady of nerve, but fluttering and tremblingly alive to every trivial occurrence. Love has sometimes been said to rule with more absolute sway in the female than in the male branch of the human species; and in my adherence to Margaret I was a very

woman. I could not bear that she should be out of my sight. I was like a child, with a new and favourite toy, who, if it is withdrawn from him for a moment, vents his displeasure in piteous sobs and piercing cries, refuses to be comforted, and counts every thing else as worthless in the comparison. I cherished her as a thing of inestimable value; I tendered her as the apple of my eye.

Such being my general feelings as they respected her, it may easily be conceived in what a state of fearful commotion they were at the present crisis. During the whole season of our married life I had never felt myself calm, unmolested and assured; but my condition now may best be compared to the uneasy motion of the waves of the sea that foreruns a coming storm. It was broad daylight in the heavens; but all was night within me. The clouds of the mind appeared to thicken on every side, as if some demon had been compounding the in-

gredients of immeasurable evil. I was full of horror and despair. I was impatient for some change in my feelings. It seemed as if the arrival of every thing most tremendous and infernal was to be preferred to the state of apprehension in which I was immured and could not escape.—Such was the history of my journey, and most especially of my return, on this decisive day.

CHAPTER X.

WILLIAM on his part, as I found afterwards, had visited the cottage on the morning of the day after that on which I commenced my journey, and had received my billet. From thence he set out on his accustomed rounds, and had ascended the brow that overlooked my grounds. He saw the entire extent of the garden, but could no where discover the person whom his eyes so earnestly sought. He went and came again; he hovered about the spot; and it seemed as if he could not tear himself away till he had obtained the gratification on which his mind was bent.

Margaret in the mean while had sustained a

terrible shock from all that had passed between her and the unwelcome person who had obtruded a visit upon her. She had forced the attention of my wife to the contemplation of tempests and shipwrecks, a subject from which any one of common humanity, recollecting the trials that Margaret had suffered, would have carefully abstained. She had started a sort of enquiry whether, after all, the fact of William's death had been established beyond the possibility of its being otherwise. So much was certain: so much Margaret clearly recollected of what passed. What followed after this, was to her apprehension involved in obscurity. The whole of what had preceded had so unsettled the mind of Margaret, throwing all her faculties into a state of confusion and uproar, her eyes were in such a disturbed state of vision, her ears so tingled, her perceptions were so indistinct and tumultuous, that she could not form any clear notion of the manner in which the

visit concluded. She had a dim recollection as if the stranger had said something about having seen her ever-mourned, ever-deplored lover on the day before. But no ; this could not be. What motive could she have for saying it ? What possibility was there that it could really be ? It is true that Margaret had not seen William an inanimate corpse, and had never received an exact and specific account what became of his remains. But she had seen the ship sink that bore him ; she had seen and read the countenances of all who escaped ; she had heard the particulars of the way in which he perished. Years had passed since that fatal day. If he had been any where among the living, he would long ago have found his way to her. Love conquers all difficulties, surmounts all obstacles, and effects what to any other power would be impossible. Oh, surely, full surely, he was dead ! Why should she torment herself with vain and maniac fictions ?

The laws of nature never had been, and never could be thus superseded.

Still the concluding words of her visitor rung in her ears. She knew that nothing could be so uncertain, as was then the state of her perceptions. Her disturbed mind was in a condition to present to her the things that were not, and to shape sounds and a sense far as the length of the earth's diameter from the reality. Imagination cannot figure to itself a frame of mind more distracting and intolerable than that of Margaret.

It might have been expected that all this uncertainty and perturbation, this horror of soul and dread of she knew not what, would have reduced her to a bed of sickness. But it was not so. In the present instance she sustained herself marvellously. It was as if some unseen power supported her, that she might meet the last calamity, and drink the cup of her misery to the dregs. At first indeed

she had not been able to leave her couch; and it was only from the kind importunity of a faithful female who attended her, that she was prevailed on to take the smallest portion of nourishment. On the second day she walked across the room. On the third she went out into the garden. On the fourth, which was the day of my return, she went beyond the garden, leaning on her maid, into the grounds adjacent. She had proceeded a very little way, when William in person stood before her.

Thus to have met her was a thing the farthest in the world from his intention. Whether he would ever by the dint of desperation and strong excitement have been driven to such an extremity as that of desiring an interview, can never now be known. He had wandered this day for hours in the vicinity, seeking for nothing but the gratification that he had of late enjoyed more than once, of seeing Margaret, himself unseen, and satisfying his eyes from a

distance, with observing her figure, her motions, all that from the remote situation from which he had then viewed her, could make up her identity. It happened however in the present instance that, having in a manner given up his purpose in despair, and turning this way and that unconsciously, he had unawares approached the garden-wall. When he observed that he had done so, he did not conceive any alarm. Each time that he had seen Margaret, she had been within the inclosure; and, as she had appeared to him in a state of much indisposition and weakness, it had not occurred to him to apprehend the possibility of her proceeding beyond.

It is not easy to imagine any thing more astounding than the encounter of these two. It was however most incredible and terrific to Margaret. On his part William had nothing to learn. He knew of the marriage of his beloved, that she could no longer be any thing to him. He had seen her again and again

within a short time,—though at a considerable distance, yet near enough to enable him to swear to her form and figure against the world. When he found himself close on the outside of the garden-wall, he knew that it was by no means impossible that she was walking on the inside, and that they might be very near to each other, though he believed, that if it were so, their meeting was not in the slightest degree to be apprehended, and that they would neither of them ever know the near point in which they had stood to each other. He had a melancholy satisfaction in this thought. He felt as if to seek for an interview might be a crime. He suspected that he ought presently to withdraw to some distant land, and to take all the care in his power that Margaret should never know that he survived. But he believed that the indulgence which had been thus accidentally thrown in his way, was at least innocent. Margaret might be at only three yards distance

from him. If walls had crevices, as an inclosure of planks usually has, he might have seen her. If he had elevated his voice, and shouted aloud, he might have been heard, perhaps even recognised by her. There may, for aught we know, be a slight, undescribed atmosphere which diffuses itself round every living being, by means of which we may act and react upon each other without contact, like the spheres of attraction and repulsion in natural philosophy. We may term this animal sympathy. It might happen thus, that Margaret should feel the near approach of William with a kind of obscure sensation, a preternatural shudder, without being able to assign to herself any cause of what she felt. Thus might these lovers have approached each other; thus might they in a certain sense have touched; and this might have served, in default of every thing else, for an everlasting farewell.—All these ideas, in

rapid and incoherent march, passed through the mind of William.

But how different was the situation of Margaret ! She had for years been convinced that her lover had passed from the scene of mortal existence. She had acted upon this conviction in the most important affair of private life. Very recently the idea and reminiscence of William, which had however scarcely ever for an hour been dormant within her, had been stirred up in her brain with more than ordinary vividness by the discourse of her unwelcome visitor. This kind of awakening is by the superstitious regarded

As harbinger preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omened coming on.

But Margaret was in a very slight degree superstitious. In addition to this she had the strange sounds, which to her memory had scarcely the character of articulations, that

had rung in her ears when she fainted, and just before her visitor had withdrawn. She did not dare give them credence. She believed that their meaning was entirely a forgery of her own disturbed and upbraiding conscience. If they were not, what was she? She now began for the first time to suspect she had done wrong in accepting my proposal of marriage. Till now, particularly inasmuch as that acceptance had been in opposition to the promptings of her heart, and in obedience to the conclusions of her reason, she had taken for granted that it was laudable, heroic and right.

Margaret and William stood, suddenly and unexpectedly, in the presence of each other. William was surprised and confounded. What then was Margaret? She was almost turned into stone. She stood aghast, her eyes fixed, her limbs trembling, unable to advance or retreat. She at length recovered her power of

speech; and, with deep, inward accents, like a voice from the tomb, she said :

What art thou ? Oh, do not mock me with the vain semblance of one departed ! Spare my weakness ! Have mercy on my faculties ! Yes, I have seen thee even thus, times without number, in my dreams. But now ! but here !—

Dear Margaret ! he replied, in a tone of undescribable pity and commiseration.

Oh, that voice !——She said no more ; but fell to the ground like one bereft of life and motion.

William was struck with the deepest alarm. He threw himself on the earth beside her. There was a small elevation of turf, no higher than a child's grave, at hand : he raised her, and gently brought her towards it.

After a time she opened her eyes, and looked up, like one that was robbed of recollection, just recovered from a deep sleep. Presently however she turned towards the fatal vision

that had deprived her of sense, and fainted again. This swoon was more durable and alarming than the former. It was with great difficulty, and with the lapse of nearly an hour, that a faint colour returned into her cheeks, and she was able to move and speak.

By a strange inconsistency, to which the constitution of human nature is liable, when Margaret recovered a second time, she seemed to have forgotten all that had passed in the last preceding period of her existence. She was like the persons whose story has been written, that have slept without intermission for several days, and have been supposed to be dead. In this resuscitation the memory of years has appeared to pass away, and they have come back at once to the thoughts of a remote period of life. Margaret forgot that she had a husband, and turned her eyes with unspeakable sweetness and delight upon the friend of her youth. She stretched out her

arms towards him, seeking his embrace. The very fact of her oblivion of the events of her later years, produced by sympathy a similar effect on him. The whole interval appeared like a dream, and he seemed as just reawaking to his former self. He felt as if there was no longer any thing to separate them, and that pure and unalloyed happiness had descended on them. This sort of transporting delusion continued for many minutes.

At the very moment that the lovers were thus engaged, I approached. I have described my journey home, the deep, the complicated, the agonising reflections that occupied my mind, the species of insanity, the wildness and disorder which reduced me to so pitiable a state. Never was journey like that journey. Blackness and despair, hatred, immortal hate, possessed me. I hated my rival ; I hated my wife and her parents : but, most of all, a loathing of myself and of all that constituted

my individuality, pervaded the chambers of my soul. I knew nothing of the successive features of the country through which I passed. It was all of one sombre, deadly hue. It was a blank and dreary scene, that seemed as if it would last for ever.

I had hitherto observed nothing of external objects ; and yet now, by an incredible fatality, when I ought to have been most blind, I saw. I had been for some time swallowed up in my own reflections, and had remained motionless. Suddenly I became like one, whom a deep torpor of the faculties, having run its destined course, has deserted. And yet it was not so, for I forgot nothing. Mechanically however I assumed a different attitude. I looked from my window, and saw that I was approaching my home—Alas, I said, no home to me, for it restores me to all that it would be heaven to me to escape ! I discerned the wall that form-

ed the boundary of my garden. It was at a distance of not more than half a mile.

My attention was arrested. I saw two human figures, a male and a female. They sat on the turf; and it was plain—their attitudes, the disposition of every part of the body, shewed—that affection, a mutual, entire melting of souls, occupied them. The external indications were indeed such, as probably to a common eye would have expressed no such thing. But, in the previously sharpened state of my faculties, every hair almost told a several tale. With the same intuitive clearness I knew in a moment who were the parties. I had never seen William before. But I felt as certain, as I should have done if I had lived with him from the hour of his birth. It was an unerring recognition. My carriage drove on. I approached nearer. There was every thing to confirm, nothing to contradict, my first

impression. The parties were so entirely occupied with each other, that outward objects were undiscerned by them. I stopped my carriage, and leaped out. I flew to the spot. I had, I scarcely knew why, loaded pistols on my person. The whole passed with the rapidity of lightning. William had barely time to rise from his posture, and make two steps towards me, when I lodged a bullet in his heart. He fell instantly, and neither moved nor stirred any more.

The deed I thus perpetrated was of terrific violence. I assumed in my own person the robe and the function of public justice. I interposed not a moment for deliberation and the sifting of evidence. Bitterly, and impelled by a thousand reasons, have I since repented what I did. But at the time I had no doubts. The highest and purest of all laws, as I believed, was with me. I saw my wife and her paramour together. I saw, as distinctly as

man ever saw the celestial orbs, correspondence, a mutual understanding and passion, depicted in their gestures. I believed, though I knew not how it had been contrived, that they had taken advantage of my absence to bring about this encounter. Was this to be forgiven? Did it not call for exemplary punishment? Should I not stamp myself the tamest of cowards, if I did not take instant vengeance?

Margaret witnessed my act with inexpressible horror. It had the effect for the moment of driving away from her all preceding weakness, and substituting in its stead an energy that seemed to exceed human energy. Volumes were comprised in that instant. But a brief moment before, she had forgotten me, her husband; she had received William as if to see him again alive was delight, pure and without alloy. The events of the last preceding years were unrecollected. Now they

crowded back again on her mind like a torrent. She did not merely recollect her husband ; he stood before her. That object, the sight of which a moment ago had filled her with more than mortal ecstasy, she saw cut down before her eyes, and stretched lifeless at her feet. It was myself, her husband, that had acted this atrocity.

Monster ! she exclaimed, Devil ! spirit of all evil ! was it for this I married you ? delivered myself unreservedly into your hands ? Yes, you have justly rewarded my confidence. Life, what art thou ? Virtue and honour, empty shadows ! My life has been all submission, submission to my father, submission to my husband. But it shall be so no longer. Out of my sight, most odious of created things ! I cannot bear it. It is death to me to look at you, to think of you. Oh, William ! William ! revive ! take me to you ! I know no other friend.

And, saying thus, she fell senseless on his corpse. The preternatural energy she had put forth, totally overcame her. I believed she had broken a blood-vessel.

CHAPTER XI.

THE deed I had acted, and the objects before me, produced a total revolution of my nature, a revulsion of blood from all the subordinate parts of my frame to the heart. It may seem strange : but the wildness and incoherence of my thoughts, the frantic sallies of mind, which had overwhelmed and tortured me from the instant I had set out on my return home, were gone : all within me was a forced and fearful calmness and composure. This was doubtless the result of the critical situation in which I stood. I was called on to determine and to act. Two human bodies, dead, or apparently dead, lay at my feet. It was incum-

bent on me to give directions concerning them, and to consult as to the conduct I was to pursue for myself. Three servants had attended me in my journey. Their distance was not such, as to prevent them from distinctly witnessing what had passed. Conformably to the instinct of human nature on such occasions, they hastened to the spot. Curiosity for ever prompts us to watch narrowly what occurs in a tragic scene, and to exercise our understandings in judging of the merits and demerits of the parties, and remarking the winding up of the whole. Margaret's female attendant was also there. By a fortunate chance Rowland, my steward, had been on horseback in an adjoining field, and now made one of the group. They looked first with wonder on the body of William whom I had killed, and then turned their eyes with silent awe upon me.

I conceived the part that it belonged to me to perform. I directed that the body of the

dead man should be conveyed to the summer-house in the garden, and that Margaret, who was perhaps only in a swoon, should be gently and carefully removed to her bed. Before the parties separated to execute my orders, I said :

My friends, you may perhaps think that I am called upon to afford some explanation of what you see. I do not shrink from doing so. Situations like that in which I stand, level all distinctions of rank. I have done only what it was impossible for me not to do. I am desirous that my conduct should stand out before the world, and be judged by the common feelings of my fellow-creatures. But this is not the time, nor this the place, for me to enter into my defence. What I have done, I have done; and I must answer it to the laws of my country. For the present I must withdraw; but the affair will not end here.

I now hastened into the house, and repaired to my dressing-room. I took from my scru-

toire the cash I happened to have by me. It amounted to some hundred pounds. Part of this I gave to Rowland, but retained the principal portion for myself. I ordered my favourite saddle-horse to be made ready. After having thus consumed about twenty minutes, I prepared to depart.

One of the last things I did was to visit the apartment of my wife. I could discern about her no signs of life. There was a copious effusion of blood. I suspected that she was dead. It was however impossible for me to observe farther. Time pressed upon me: I must be gone. I directed Rowland, at the same moment that I departed, to dispatch one of my footmen for a neighbouring physician. I commissioned him to write to the father of Margaret. I charged him to transmit to me a full account of every thing that passed, and to send his letter, with a small portmanteau that I pointed out to him, and every thing that might be ne-

cessary for my immediate accommodation, to the post-house of the principal town of a neighbouring county. I emphatically urged him to take care that I was not observed or molested, nor for a few brief hours to suffer any outcry to be made in the vicinity, but to conduct every thing with composure and discretion.

My servants of course received my orders with the most entire deference. They felt that it did not belong to them to control me. Beside which, it is certain that I had always so conducted myself, as commanded their deepest sympathy and respect. They looked at me with awe, not unmingled with terror, but did not utter a word, except to answer my questions, and declare their acquiescence in all I prescribed. In the countenances of Rowland and the rest I saw plainly depicted compassion, and those good wishes in my behalf, that human beings never fail to entertain for such persons, as they have seen frequently, and

been accustomed to regard as worthy to be honoured.

I set out alone. I directed my course towards the house of an old acquaintance, a schoolfellow and fellow-collegian of my early years.

My thoughts were saddened in an inconceivable degree. But all was methodical and composed. I would have given worlds to have purchased a happy interval of oblivion and insanity. But I felt as if I should never sleep again. The demon of perspicuity, and clear, diaphanous apprehension was at my elbow. The genius of prophetic anticipation mounted my horse with me, clung close to my person, and would not be shaken off.

How total was the change of my destiny ! Within little more than an hour I had become a murderer, that is, a person who has designedly taken away the life of his fellow, an exile, a widowed wanderer upon earth. What were

to me all my lands and possessions, the costliness of my furniture, and the magnificence of my paternal mansion? I should see them no more. I must "shape my old course in a country new."

I took a long and a lasting farewell of all false refinements. "When the mind is free," the senses are "delicate." I had been idle, full of supersubtle distinctions, jealous. I had had a wife that honoured me, that smoothed my pillow beneath my head, that hastened ever to supply my wants, and anticipate my wishes. But, forsooth, she did not love me enough; I did not sufficiently reign her bosom's lord. These are luxuries of a mind at ease. Where was I now to pillow my head? What friend would be near to comfort me? No; I was an outcast of the world. The stormy skies would be the only canopy above me; the desert wilderness would be my retiring chamber and my eating-room.

When I look back on this period, I am astonished that I consented to live, and did not cast this worthless carcase upon the same pile with my wife and the man I had murdered. This is one of the strangest phenomena of our nature. The more our existence ceases to have any thing for which we should desire it, any thing pleasing in retrospect, or hopeful for the future, we often seem to cling to it the more tenaciously. As if we said, I have nothing else ; but this I swear I will never resign. Stripped of every thing, loaded with grief and remorse, hunted, as I might expect to be, by my fellow-men, and every moment anticipating an ignominious and accursed death, I desperately resolved that, though every misery should be mine, and the world confederate against me, I would not yield, but keep up the combat to the last.

My journey was melancholy : but my mind was no longer at sea, driven before the winds.

The calamity I had perpetrated was too gigantic and wide of extent, not to make me sober. I would have repented; but for me, like the man we are told of, who climbed over the rails at the top of the Monument of London, and clung to them for a while on the outside, there was no room for repentance. The die was cast, for as long as I existed here, or in the dark, unfathomable future. Nor could I perceive how I could have acted, otherwise than I had acted. My fate drove me on. I had seen that which it was impossible to see, and remain inactive. I thought tenderly of Margaret; for I was thoroughly acquainted with all her exemplary virtues, and was satisfied that never human creature had been so deeply unfortunate. Still she was not, and could no longer continue to be, my wife, my companion, the friend of my bosom.

From these useless retrospects I turned to the contemplation of the future. I knew not

from what quarter it would come ; but I did not doubt that, as it happens to all men circumstanced as I was, I should be perseveringly sought for, and every effort would be made to render me responsible to the laws of my country. In the manner of the death of William there was nothing ambiguous. It was clear how he came by his fate ; and there was witness in abundance to bring it home to me. In my own eyes I stood justified for the act of destroying him. But I knew enough of the laws of my country, to know that that which in my mind was a vindication, would not be so received in an English court of justice as to obtain my acquittal of the crime of murder. The death of Margaret, for I believed she was dead, would not fail, though my hands were clear of the charge of perpetrating it, to operate so as grievously to exasperate a judge and jury against me. The two events were parts of one act, and were accomplished in the same

hour. I should certainly be regarded as a monster of iniquity, hardened in crime. It was therefore incumbent on me so to dispose of myself, as to prevent my falling into the hands of the myrmidons of the law.

The thoughts that occupied my mind, did not cease to fill up my time for the hours I was on horseback. I turned up the avenue which led to my friend's house. I then began to consider, what I was to talk of during my visit, and what I was to assign as the occasion of my coming.

The master of the house was at home, and came out to receive me. His manner was full of cordiality. I spoke slightly and uncertainly as to the cause of my visit, but mentioned the town to which I had resorted on business, and which I had quitted that very morning, and expressed myself so as to make my host understand that, by a circuit, I had contrived to

come from thence to his residence, before I returned home.

It was necessary I should remain for many hours at my friend's house, that I might give time for the communication I expected from my steward. My situation here was painful beyond what it is possible to imagine. I had but one conception, one train of thoughts for ever present to my mind, and of this I must not utter a syllable. My meditations were fixed; I could even feel the muscles of my face collapsing continually into an expression of despair; and I was compelled to counterfeit the gestures of a mind at ease, and urge myself forward to talk of the thousand nothings, which make up the substance of ordinary conversation, particularly at the board of a country squire. From time to time I smiled; but it was a mournful and a wintry smile: I laughed; but it was the hollow and frightful laugh of a

murderer. Towards the conclusion of the evening my efforts were wholly exhausted. This my host seemed willing to attribute to fatigue. Never were hours more intolerably tedious. It seemed as if the motion that gives life to universal nature, were still, and that the day would never have an end. At length I retired to my chamber.

I was however new in murder. When I was left alone during the hours of night, with no external incidents playing on my organs of sense, that was worst. I put out my candle, and threw myself on the bed. I had been greatly exhausted by the occurrences of the day; and I presently fell into a sort of slumber. This was merely a licence, delivering my mind from the laws which govern that of a man awake, and introducing every thing that was most frightful and odious. I passed in imagination through all the scenes of the preceding day. I saw Margaret and William, my

victims. I bathed my hands, and besmeared my arms in his blood. He seemed to expire in agonies. The moment after, he appeared to revive, and mock the impotence of my revenge. He and Margaret joined to insult, to gibe at, and torment me. These scenes were acted over and over again, I know not how oft. Then succeeded visions of chains, of dungeons and trial. By some strange combination of inconsistency, Margaret and William appeared to be the principal among the witnesses against me, urging my fate, and invoking an ample retribution.

What an end was that of my sainted victim! Through life she had been a sacrifice. Blameless in every relation in which she was successively placed. Deserving every thing, yet obtaining nothing. Exemplary in all her duties, yet successful in none of her efforts. If there was ever creature that merited consideration and forbearance from all, and that “even the

winds of heaven should not visit her face too roughly," it was she. Yet all the inclemency of the elements beat upon her; all the tyranny of man seemed to select her as the object upon which it was to be remorselessly exercised. Upon her tomb it might worthily be inscribed, "Here at last reposes the most unoffending, the most meritorious, and the most cruelly treated of her sex, entitled to the tenderest usage, exposed on the most trying and momentous occasions to the harshest and most brutal."

CHAPTER XII.

MORNING at length came ; and, without again communicating with my host, I set out. I repaired, with a short interval to refresh myself and my horse, to the market-town, which I had appointed for the communications of my steward. This was the first chapter in that series of terrors and alarms that have never since forsaken me. Till I entered this place, I had believed myself safe. I had had no fears of hostility or violence from my servants. Some hours would therefore have elapsed, before any plan could be concerted for pursuing me, and taking from me my personal liberty. In this respect, however annoyed and tortured

on other accounts, under the roof of my host of the preceding night, I had felt secure.

By the time however of my entering the town at which I had ordered Rowland to address his communications, I began to calculate that it was possible I might encounter some effectual obstacle to my further proceeding. Not more than twenty-four hours indeed had elapsed, since my perpetrating the deed I might be called on to expiate. My servants I knew would take no step that might conduce to my loss of liberty. The physician that I had ordered to be sent for, would perhaps be the first person, who might deem himself called upon by his station in society, to interfere for the forwarding of public justice, and it was yet somewhat early for me to expect annoyance in consequence of any thing he should do. In the mean while there is no mode of calculating what might happen in a case of this sort. Some person, who had no motive to favour or shelter

me, might accidentally come to the knowledge of what had occurred, sooner than the physician. It is true that Rowland alone possessed the clue that should direct any one to the county-town I now entered; and I was morally sure that he would not allow himself to be made, directly or indirectly, my destroyer, by betraying that which was confided to him only. The servant who should bring what I required might be a cause of molestation to me; but he would have as little the time, as the inclination, to be the probable means of my being delivered into custody.

Such was the calculation I was able to form respecting my immediate safety. But it was in vain that I reasoned on the subject. The mere possibility that something fatal might occur, was matter enough for my apprehensions to work upon. I no sooner saw the spires of the county-town in the distance before me, than strange suspicions took hold of my mind.

Ought I to enter the main street, or turn down into any of the bye-roads and avoid it? I however rebuked the suggestion, and said to myself, Though I am guilty, I will not be a coward. Though the beatings of my heart be quick and strong within me, I will conquer them.

I entered the town. Once and twice I saw indications, which to my jealous mind afforded matter of deliberation, and exercised my powers of conjecture. I observed some one eyeing me more curiously than I should have judged natural. A horseman advanced behind me with greater than common speed; but he passed me, and took no notice. I went to the inn I had specified, but was told that nothing had come there to my address. I retired to a chamber.

A few minutes after, a waiter appeared, and informed me that there was a person below, enquiring for me. I could feel that I turned pale as he spoke. I speedily learned however

that it was no other than my own servant, dispatched by Rowland. I ordered that he should be sent to me. He brought the letter and portmanteau that I expected.

I looked at him wistfully. I said, Strange things, John, happened yesterday. You will not for the present see me again at home. I am full of grief. At a proper time however I shall appear, and clear up every thing that now shews to my disadvantage. You, John, are not my enemy ?

He protested, that no earthly consideration should induce him to do me an injury.

You have not spoken to any one here, or on the road, of what has occurred at home ?

He had not. Rowland had recommended it to him to be silent ; and, had it been otherwise, he would not have uttered a word, that could have been the occasion of mischief. There was in his look an expression of the deepest interest in my behalf.

I bade him wait in the inn an hour, and I would speak to him again. I told him that it was of the utmost importance to me, that he should be discreet.

This was to me the first consequence of guilt. I was obliged to humble myself to my own servant. It depended upon him to be my destroyer.

I opened the letter of Rowland. It contained little new, more than the confirmation that Margaret was certainly dead. Nothing material had yet occurred under my own roof. He expected from hour to hour the parents of my wife.

I appeared now to have small room for deliberation. The most natural and the safest course, as I judged, for me to adopt, was to leave my native isle, and endeavour to hide myself in some foreign climate, happy if I should be able to effect this unmolested. As long as I remained in England, and a pursuit,

which I did not doubt would be the case, were set on foot against me, I felt that I should be beset with daily terrors and nightly alarms, and should apprehend each hour that this would be the last hour of my liberty. Till now I had regarded personal freedom, and justly, as a part of my inheritance, of which no man could deprive me ; and I made no account of it accordingly. I went this way and that, as I pleased. I staid at home in my own mansion, or went abroad for exercise and amusement, or to visit my neighbours ; and no man interfered with me, and said, Why dost thou this ? I visited the metropolis, or made a tour in my native isle, unmolested. I looked round from the terrace in my garden, and viewed the park, the meadows, the trees, the streams, and a small lake surrounded with my property, without apprehension. There was a road in the distance, along which I saw carriages of all sorts, public and private, horsemen and pedestrians, passing

this way and that incessantly. What mattered it to me to search into their purposes? In the words of the old song, "I was myself the king of me." If the concerns of the persons I saw had any relation to my concerns, their import was of aid or of deference. If they thought nothing of me, and were busied only in their own affairs, of this at least I was secure, They purposed me no harm. I "doffed the world, and bade it pass."

How different was now my situation! Every man I did not know, I had some reason to suspect for an enemy. If he accosted me, I might with probability apprehend that he had a design against me. If he passed along the road in a direction that did not lead from my house, he might be coming to put me under restraint. I had great cause therefore to watch the gestures and looks of every one I saw. All the world was in a confederacy against me. Every one would rejoice, such is the law of

civilized communities, at my misfortune. What gave me pain, would afford pleasure to every living being who heard of it. Whoever was called upon to arrest my steps, would eagerly place himself in my path with hostile intent, for they would cry, He is a murderer ! When I was brought out to die in the face of the world, they would feel satisfied ; and, when I expired, they would utter shouts of approbation.

Nothing, I was well aware, was more precise than the expounding and application of the English law in the case of murder. It is like the application of a cloth-yard in a mercer's shop. In the matter of duelling only is it dispensed with. There the common sense of mankind rises against it ; and the judge, however well disposed for the most part to be rigorous, finds himself obliged to relax. In all other instances the life of the individual arraigned, is disposed of in obedience to terms and de-

finitions. The only question is, Does the deed under consideration come up to the rule? just as in the shop of the mercer we decide, Does the cloth measure three feet of twelve inches each? The investigation is of malice; in other words, Had the individual accused so much time given, between the sight of the offence that irritated him, and the infliction of the mortal wound, as may logically and metaphysically be interpreted to have afforded room for deliberation? Thus the judge rules it, and the jury obey, and the executive government rarely and with infinite hesitation supersedes the rule. No consideration is had of the character of the parties, or the nature of the provocation. The heart of the judge is dead within him, and so of the rest. The whole is determined, in a way that more resembles the turning of a machine, than the decision of that complicated being called man, endowed with eyes to see, and an understanding to discriminate, and a heart to

feel, and a moral sense to judge according to the eternal law written in the skies.—It is further worthy to be considered, that circumstances tending to aggravate are sure to be taken into the account; not so circumstances tending to extenuate.

As I have already said, I resolved, if possible, to quit the island of Great Britain. What did I leave behind me that was worthy of my regret? I had lost two wives, Emilia and Margaret. I left my mansion, my park, and my woods, the terraces of my garden and its embowering shades, the well known apartments in which I had spent the greater part of my life, their furniture and pictures, and a well chosen library, accumulated year after year principally by the taste and judgment of my father, and by my own. I left an establishment of servants, all faithful, many of them grown old in my service, and who were to me little less than humble friends. What then?

The property and conveniences to which we are accustomed, are but dead matter ; and the life of man, or even his tranquillity, is not indissolubly bound up with these. Our servants we are more in the practice of regarding with condescension, than affection ; and, even if we sometimes feel a pang in losing them, the wound is in no long time scarred over and healed. I had not lived to these years in the world, always honoured and thought well of, and not unblest with the faculties, that should amuse the social hour, supply the suggestions of prudence and wisdom, or shew the ingenuousness of my heart and the tender sympathies of my soul, without having acquired friends, some who ranked with me merely as desirable or valued acquaintance, one or two, of whom I shall have occasion hereafter to speak, with whom I had lived on terms of true confidence and reciprocal communication. But they had never occupied my soul, or engrossed all the

longings of my nature, as Emilia and Margaret had done. To lose them all was a dreary anticipation. I had lost them by one momentary, decisive act, that could never be repaired.

But there was an individual, whom it was agony to me to think of parting withal, and yet from whom I must be separated ; and this was my daughter, my only child. Her name has not lately occurred in this narrative. She remained six years on the continent with Mrs. Fielding, the sister of Mrs. Fanshaw, and her daughters ; and when she returned to England, she found me already engaged in the marriage-state for the second time. During her travels she had contracted sentiments of the deepest affection for the family with which she was domesticated ; and all the Fieldings joined in the most earnest intreaties to her and myself, that they might not be separated now that they were returned to their native country. It was at length settled that she should reside for

about three" months at a time alternately, with me, and with her young friends.

On her arrival at home, I introduced the two persons I loved best in the world to each other. I have omitted to notice their intercourse in its proper order, because I thought it would come in better here. They immediately conceived an uncommon affection for each other. They were distinguished beauties, but of a different order. Catherine was a stranger to deep and soul-harrowing afflictions. Her cheek was smooth and round; and the first bloom of her complexion had never been impaired. Her eye revelled with flashes of life; and her motions in the ordinary communication of society were quick and animated like an epigram. Yet her soul was penetrated with sensibility; her colour changed with every variety of suggestion and emotion; the tear of sympathy was ever ready in her eye; and her quivering lip plainly told, how fully her heart

was accessible to every benignant and generous impression. Margaret on the contrary, though fraught, particularly at that time, with tenderness and watchful attentions, was obviously a glorious temple in ruins. You could see that she was very far from being the lustrous creature she had been. Never for a moment did a certain expression of disappointment and despair forsake her. For a short time, at brief intervals, her eye became animated, and then relapsed into sorrow. Her cheek was white, though of exquisite fairness ; and you seemed to see on it the traces of her tears. It has been said, that human creatures often love one another the more emphatically, because they are cast in different moulds, and are of unlike dispositions. Thus it was with Margaret and Catherine. They conceived at once an ardent attachment. They playfully called mother and daughter, though there was but four years' difference in their ages. But they were more like

sisters. In jest they amused themselves with personating authority and obedience, and contented themselves with feeling the equality of the heart. Margaret had been sobered by calamity, and in this sense was the wiser of the two. She had read more, and therefore was more perfect and consummate in the knowledge of authors, and in literary taste. But in knowledge of the world she was a mere child. They shone alternately, accordingly as one subject or another happened to be the topic of conversation. They had each of them stored up in memory passages of the poets, sublime conception, luxuriant imagery, picturesque description ; but Margaret dwelt the most upon passages of love, of tenderness, of sorrow and desolation. In criticism, in exact delineation of the qualities and forte of the several writers, and the hidden excellencies of their different works, she was the superior. But Catherine could talk with the most thorough knowledge,

of countries and their manners, of the world and courts, and the gradations of society, of music as it exists in Italy and Germany, and of the wondrous productions of art in the most favoured quarters of the earth. She was also extensively acquainted with the most beautiful and romantic scenery of the more known countries of the world; and in her animated descriptions the hearer was converted into a spectator, and could scarcely believe that he had not personally witnessed what was so fully set before him.

Here then was a pair of friends, the purest, the most innocent, of the most affectionate tempers, and the soundest discernment, that the world ever saw. From the moment they first beheld, they understood each other. Their attachment was like Jonah's gourd, that "sprang up in the night," and spread forth its branches, and was as "a shadow over their heads," to protect them from the fierce beams of the sun,

and the changeful inclemency of the seasons. Yet, ardently as they loved each other in the commencement, the feeling was nevertheless susceptible of increase. The treasures of their information and their sentiments could not have been apprehended by each other in a day ; and I have no doubt, that the more protracted and various their intercourse had been, the more cause each would have seen, from day to day, and from year to year, to value, and as it were to adore, the other.

And to this friendship I put an abrupt close ! I extinguished one portion of this inimitable pair. God knows my heart ! nothing could have been further from my intention than to be the destroyer of Margaret. I would not have hurt a hair of her head. I fully appreciated, nobody understood them better, the whole of her merits. When I was most convinced of her unfaithfulness to the engagements she had formed with me at the altar, even then

I most pitied her. But I was hurried on by an irresistible fate. And, at the moment, and for some time afterwards, I believed I was right. Cruel, terrific was the alternative in which I was placed. But I was convinced that the least thing I was called on to do, was abruptly to remove from the stage of existence the man, who returned from the dead (among whom he ought to have rested for ever) with no other possible result, than to crush the happiness of those who survived, himself the unhappiest of them all.

CHAPTER XIII.

CATHERINE was at the period of this catastrophe with her friends, the Fieldings, in London. I knew we must part, probably never to meet again. But I could not prevail upon myself to leave England, without one last, solemn farewell. As I have already said, there were but two persons from whom it was death to me to be severed for ever, my wife, and my daughter. I had gazed on the pale countenance of the one, as she lay, as it afterwards proved, dead in her bridal chamber. But my heart was then made hard. My conceptions were reduced into a gloomy, deadly sobriety. I looked on ; and I said nothing.

It was otherwise as respected my daughter. Black as were my prospects, red and hateful as were my hands in my mind's eye, I had no guilt, properly speaking, towards her. When I thought of Catherine, my heart was as tender as a new-born babe.

I came to London, that I might see her. I alighted in a remote part of the metropolis. I sent a coach to fetch her to me, and with the coach a letter.

I could not however take this step without terrible misgivings. The thought of seeing my daughter, opened afresh all the wounds of my heart. I had perpetrated a dreadful deed ; and it had been attended with tremendous consequences. I had slain my rival ; my wife was dead ; and I was cut off for ever from the society, the general community of beings, who partook along with me of the human form.

But in what I had done, and what had followed upon my deed till now, I was exalted,

and taken out of myself. I had in fact been another being, from the hour that William's letter was put into my hands, and still more from the hour that I knew he was in my neighbourhood. I felt as if I were the only being in all this complication, that was worthy to be pitied. My victims in my eyes were offenders, and I the aggrieved party. What had I done to deserve this misery? I had married a beautiful young female, with her own consent, and that of her parents. This was certainly no crime, and did not merit the terrible retribution that had been reserved for me. I thought therefore of Margaret with a torture that I was unable to endure; and I thought of William with abhorrence. These ruminations had filled my soul even to bursting, during the excursion I had made from my home, and on my return. As I approached my own house in returning, I saw that which at once worked up my soul to rage and to madness; and I perpetrated the deed,

which could never be recalled, never obliterated, and which followed me with retribution and vengeance for ever.

From the instant that my revenge had been consummated in the death of my rival, my nature, as I have said, had totally changed. I saw what I had done, and felt that I must stand to the consequences. I was desperate ; but I was in a state of inforced calmness and composure. I looked to every thing ; I provided for every thing. I girded up the loins of my mind, and felt the condition in which I was placed. I must take care of myself ; for there was no one that cared for me. “My heart was turned to stone ; I struck it, and it hurt my hand.”

But, when I thought of Catherine, the case was totally different. The feelings of humanity came back upon me with an overflowing tide. I had resolved to see her, to tell her a tale of griefs inexpressible,—of the death of the

new and valued friend she had acquired—but that was little :—I had to tell her of the part her father had acted.

The soul of Catherine was purity itself. It was a piece of unstained paper, fair and bright as the first beams of the morning sun. She had heard of vice and crime. But they had been to her as the theoretical terms of a science treated of in books. “They passed by her as the idle wind, which she respected not.” She regretted that such things were, and that the species man, so noble in reason, so glorious in faculties, should be stained with such enormities as are recorded of him.

And now she was to hear all this brought home to her father. She knew much that was good of me ; she believed every thing. Such is the constitution of the human mind. Plato says, that, if we could see virtue in her proper form, all men would fall down and adore her.

But it is even thus that we do see virtue, particularly in the early part of our lives. We are all anthropomorphites. We clothe the qualities that our understanding bodies out to us, and the pulses of our heart approve, in some human shape, gracious, engaging and reverend; and that shape, to a child honourably and happily born, is the shape of its parent.

I had come to London, principally to see my daughter, to take of her a lasting farewell. My heart was torn in a thousand pieces. If ever a pain was mixed with a pleasure, it was my case in the present instance. I could not go back from the interview upon which I had resolved. I could not prevail on myself to see Catherine no more. She must hear the thing I had acted, if not from me. Was it not then incumbent on me to be the relator? I must look in her face, and observe how she received the intelligence. If it could be softened to her,

it was I that ought to mitigate it. If she needed the aid of another to enable her to bear it, I ought to be the ally and the comforter.

The letter I wrote was as follows.

My dearest daughter,

I am in London. Come to me instantly. Come alone. I send a carriage to fetch you. Prepare yourself. Call up your resolution. Unless I mistake, you are capable of arduous things; and I grieve to say you will be tried. Unhappy girl! Unhappy father!

P. D.

Say to the family with which you reside that I have sent for you: but shew no one this letter.

It was not long ere Catherine stood before me. I heard her approaching the apartment in which I sat, with indescribable emotion on my part. I looked at her. Her countenance and her whole figure expressed the commotion

of her soul, a fearful anticipation of she knew not what.

My father! she said. Are you alive? Are you well? What is it you have to communicate? Thank God, I have a father!

You have terrified me greatly. But do not fear me! Do not spare me! I am ready, indeed I am ready, for all you can have to say.

It relieves me to hear you. Catherine! my wife, Margaret, is dead!

Dead! Indeed that is sudden! She was surely an angel. I relied that she would have been my nearest, most valued friend. And your loss must be greater than mine.

But, my father, she added after a moment's pause, I see that you have something else behind. You did not send for me with this precaution, you have not used all these preparations, merely to announce this sad news. Tell me at once! Shew me, I pray you, with what your bosom is labouring.

Well, I have a dreadful tale. I cannot put it into order. Take it, as I am able to communicate it.

Margaret, before she knew me, had a lover, to whom she was contracted, from whom she was compulsorily separated, who was lost, or supposed to be lost, at sea. She loved this individual with entire, engrossing affection ; I only came in in the second place, a substitute, to occupy the ruins of a heart.

This man lived ; he returned from a tedious exile ; I have known that for some time. Two days ago I caught them together, in my own park. What had passed between them I know not ; but I saw them in attitudes that implied much. I perceived that they were occupied with each other in entire affection, and had no thought of any thing but that affection. The eyes of a doting husband see this in a moment. I came upon them. I had pistols. My blood boiled within me. The lover was unarmed ;

he had no time to resist. I drew a pistol, and laid him at my feet. He is dead ; Margaret is dead. She expired from the bursting of a blood-vessel.

Oh, Catherine, why are you condemned to hear this tale of horrors ? I could not consent that you should hear it from another. I have been the unhappy wretch, fated to accomplish all this mischief ; and the least penance I could impose on myself was that I should be the person to bring you the news. I am going instantly into exile. I have sent for you to bid you farewell.

Never was a young and innocent creature tried, as my child was tried on this occasion. She had known no sorrow ; and the utmost imaginable sorrow came upon her at once. She had never heard of crime ; and her father stood before her, red from the perpetration of a murder.

The agitation of Catherine was extreme.

And what heightened all her trials, was that she must in no way betray what she suffered. She was silent : but, notwithstanding all her efforts, she grew as pale as death. Her lips were visibly convulsed. She would have rejected with scorn every story that could have been reported to her of crime and disgrace to her father. And here it was, brought to her by myself, explicitly avowed ; “ no loop to hang a doubt on,” no refuge for scepticism or incredulity that remained to her. I had shewn myself the slave of passion, incapable of moderation and restraint, hurried into the last excesses, which are usually committed only by creatures without education, without discipline, and accustomed to listen to no suggestions but those of unlicensed passion.

I proceeded : How you must feel this tragic tale I can easily conceive. But, whatever are *your* feelings, I know how the laws of England will judge of it. I have forfeited my life. If

I am caught, I shall die on the gallows. But I will not allow myself to be apprehended, to be committed to prison, to be consigned to a dungeon, to be subjected to the profane and execrable hands of the executioner. I am not content to die an ignominious death, to be recorded a convicted criminal, to have my name placed in the annals of those, whose deeds are read from age to age with detestation. I cannot endure the thought of this for myself; I cannot endure that your innocent spirit and your blameless life should be coupled with such a story. I will go into exile; you shall never see, never hear of me more. Oh, Catherine, when you think of me, do not, do not, load my memory with execrations !

During the whole of this narrative she uttered not a word. Several times she gasped, and with difficulty drew her breath. Once and again her whole frame seemed to shudder. But she roused herself, and subdued the weakness

of her frame to an emphatic steadiness. When I had done, she said :

Father, you shall not go alone. Wherever you are, I will be your companion.

I looked at her with astonishment. I replied : Catherine, you know not what you are saying. You have not understood me.

Not understood you ! Every word you have said is written in inextinguishable characters in my heart.

Catherine, I am a degraded, a dishonoured man. I have done that which, if there were no laws to punish, would urge all men to fly from me, as they would from contamination and pestilence. And shall your angelic innocence and purity be associated with it ? No ; drop a tear of sorrow for my misery ; and then forget me for ever ! Do not let your days of tranquillity and bliss hereafter, be blasted with one thought of the wretch before you !

Father ! rest assured of this, I will follow you through the world.

My child, recollect yourself ! Look upon me ! I am like a wretch, whom the lightning of heaven has scarred. Never more shall I know one interval of serenity. I feel that a demon from hell will for ever dog my steps. No indication of a smile will again play upon my lips. I shall become haggard and pale. I shall waste away to a skeleton. Balmy slumber will never more weigh down my eyelids. My temper will become peevish and morose ; no efforts to serve me will at any time be acknowledged ; but, wretched and intolerable to myself, I shall render every one that approaches me miserable. The tyrant of antiquity, who signalised his cruelty by chaining a living body to a dead one, did not entail upon his victim a more tremendous fate, than would be that of the person who should attend me in my wanderings.

Father, replied Catherine, you do but shew me the more your need of a companion, such as I will be to you. Oh, you do not know with

what art and unwearied skill I will medicine your griefs. My patience shall conquer your moroseness. I will prove so considerate and kind, that I will defy you not to smile upon me. You cannot be without a companion; and no companion will be so suitable for you as I am determined to be found.

How, answered I, can I sufficiently thank you for this unexpected good-will? But I foresee, Catherine, what the tenour of my future life will prove. If you could overcome the petulance of a temper, hating the world, and hating itself, yet my life will be one series of apprehension and terror. Such a deed as mine will not go unpursued. Whether in England, or out of England, the beagles of justice will not fail to be at my heels. By night and by day I shall never be in safety. I must fly from place to place, must conceal myself in a thousand lurking holes, and put on a multitude of disguises. I perpetrated the deed I have narrated

to you by myself; and by myself must I endeavour to elude its consequences.

Father, you mistake. In the situations of which you speak, I can many ways be of service. When you grow tired of the task of perpetual escape, I can supply you with fresh suggestions, and by my animation recruit your wasted spirits. An ally in such a case will often be more collected and perspicacious than a principal. I shall be able at one time to interpose, so as to give you time to withdraw, and at another by my ingenuity and presence of mind to put the pursuers on a false scent, and so to deliver you. When the danger is past, I will be at hand with my congratulations, to restore you again to yourself.

There was a time, my child, when I was entitled to your assistance. The duty of a child to its parent is sacred. But it is so, no longer than the parent conducts himself worthily. Such a delinquency as mine divorces

the engagement, and puts an end to the tie. A guilty soul and deeds of blood can maintain no claim on a virtuous mind. Take then, my Catherine, your own way. Wherever you go, good fame and honour shall pursue you. You shall be loved and be happy. Forget that you had a father, who would prove a clog upon your steps, and the remembrance of whom would overcloud the glories that are reserved for you.

What, my father, replied Catherine, and do you think you shall persuade me to leave you? "A guilty soul and deeds of blood can maintain no claim on a virtuous mind." Believe me, this is not so. These are the maxims of selfishness and cowardice. The more the world deserts you, the more will I cling to you. What, because the friend of my soul is unhappy, shall I withdraw myself? Shall I leave you, because you are guilty,—in other words, because you are in trouble? These are indeed admirable and praiseworthy principles! No: the more com-

pletely you are alone, the more certainly will I be at your side. If all the world hiss at and scout you, this will be an additional reason for me to be your comforter. I will be at hand to smooth your pillow, when you most need a friend. I will pour the balm of consolation into your wounds, when the world most combines to destroy you. If you go to prison, I will go with you. If you are arraigned in a court of justice, I will be near you. If you mount the scaffold, I will ascend with you. Shall your last hours be hours of solitude and agony and despair, when I might be at hand to cheer and support you?

How can I do otherwise? You bid me seek tranquillity and peace. Envious indeed would be my tranquillity, if I deserted a father in his utmost need in pursuit of it! I well "foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discouragement and reproach," if upon this memorable occasion I omitted the

smallest particle of my adherence and loyalty. Your violence, which you so industriously aggravate, was committed under the utmost provocation, and when the boiling of your blood was hot within you. But the conduct you would urge me to adopt, would be premeditated and measured, of the most dastard and cowardly sort, and such as I could never look back upon without loathing and self-detestation. No, my father; were I mean enough to seek only my own ease, assure yourself, I would look for it in acts the recollection of which might convince me that I had been good and faithful, a true daughter to a parent that I never thought of but with adoration. Life upon any other terms would be a burthen too bitter to be sustained.

What could I reply to the eloquence, or, which is much better, to the self-devotion of my Catherine? I yielded. I viewed her with reverence and awe, as I might have regarded a being descended from the spheres, to sustain a

weak and erring mortal. But she would not endure this distance between us. She threw her arms round my neck; she sobbed upon my bosom.

Take me, my father ! she said: Mould me at your pleasure ! Henceforth I have no destination in life, no office concentrating all the powers of my nature, but that of being devoted to your service and advantage. In this service there is perfect freedom; in this religion there is pure felicity. It is the first question of a well-constituted mind, How can I make myself perfectly useful ? How can I employ all my thoughts and energies in substantial good ? Every hour of an upright spirit is lost, that is not occupied in acts of kindness. Yet how many hours of every one slide away from him in matters of cold indifference ? Hitherto it has been so with me. But now I have an object for which to live, a principle that shall direct my smallest actions. Every morning

that I rise, I shall say, What can I do for my father? How shall I cheer him, prevail upon him to smile and be at peace? Every sound that I hear will be an alarm to me, to excite me to defend and preserve him. And my heart tells me, I shall succeed in this. No power shall conquer or baffle my constancy; and heaven itself will second the fervour of my intentions.

It is not to be told, what an effect this generosity of my daughter produced on my soul. For weeks I had been miserable,—ever since the letter of William was put into my hands announcing to me that he lived. From that instant all had been storm and uproar within me. A multitude of tempestuous winds seemed to hurry my mind in contrary directions. I was like a man who had committed himself to a frail bark, which is every moment about to go to pieces. Hollow and portentous blasts roar on all sides around him; the sails flap, and the cordage splits, and the canvas seems torn into

a thousand pieces. If he sleeps, sleep affords him no intermission. In this imperfect shutting up of the senses, he is still pursued by the sounds, whether it be the reality that continues to haunt him, or that his faithful imagination repeats the terror, when the thing itself can no longer be perceived : he is unvisited with a single instant of cessation. Such was the situation in which I stood. No sunshine appeared to me : every thing was black as Erebus.

At length I resolved to shake off this incubus. I was strongly excited ; and I yielded to the excitement. I believed that this was the crisis of my fortune ; and it was so. But what change was it that ensued ? I was loaded with the imputation of the blackest crime ; I, whose character had been hitherto as white as snow, who had gone to bed every night from the hour of my birth, with the consciousness of innocence and honour, and had risen every morning with

hands unspotted with guilt. I was cut off from human society; I was destined to be hunted as a beast of prey, and to be looked upon by all men with horror and execration. I said to myself, The hand of every man is against me. Previously to the crime I had perpetrated, my mind was all uproar and confusion; subsequently all was gloomy composure and hopelessness. I was alone, unsympathized with and unassisted, left to force my way as I could through the tangled mazes and the wilderness of the world.

Conceive therefore what it was to me in this situation, to find a friend ! It was like life from the dead. My condition resembled that of Peter in the Acts, to whom, "the same night that he slept between two soldiers, being bound to them with two chains, the angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the prison, and his fetters fell off from his hands." That I should have one person to befriend me, who

truly accorded with me, who loved me with rooted affection, and in whose heart dwelt every thing that was generous and noble, was transport to my spirit. I was no longer alone. I had a being to animate and encourage me in my deepest despondency. When my own spirit and energies were exhausted, I still had an ally, upon whom I could confidently repose, and who would watch for me incessantly.

There was something in the love of my daughter, that surpassed every thing that I had before witnessed in a human creature. Margaret may be said to have loved me, for, though the first fruit of her affections had been irrevocably devoted to another, yet she had ever been attentive to my smallest wants, and had on all occasions anticipated my wishes. The love of Emilia was of another sort. She had been a perfect model of all that a wife could be. Our impulses at all times harmonised, and the entire cordiality with which we

regarded. each other was never interrupted. But my life with Emilia had been all sunshine; we were equals in age; and our hopes, our desires and our preferences fully coincided. With Catherine it was otherwise. It was necessary for her in the outset to sacrifice her youth, and the propensities inseparable from youth. She must devote herself to obscurity and mourning, be cut off from the society of her equals, and excluded from the world. Affection must be indeed sublimed, before it can arrive at this supremacy. Ours was the alliance of a natural buoyancy and gaiety with everlasting sadness, of the most animating prospects with hopeless adversity. Virtue and innocence invited Catherine to the recreations which are best suited to their nature; and she made choice of the alliance of guilt, because that guilt was her father's. Spotless herself, she voluntarily took up her abode under the tents of contamination. She chose to dwell in a scene

of uninterrupted terrors and alarm. Judge, if I did not appreciate her merit in all this. I earnestly and with fervour dissuaded her from the sacrifice. But, when it was already made, I could not but most ardently admire her disinterestedness, and be in a slight degree reconciled to myself, that I was the individual in whose favour it had been resolved on.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE purpose itself being fixed, Catherine returned to her friends, to announce that her father had communicated to her his desire that he might presently be gratified with her society. She apologised to them for the abruptness of her removal, but added that the occasion, into the particulars of which she was not at liberty to enter, admitted of no delay. The persons, with whom she had now for some time been in a manner domesticated, could not but observe that something of an extraordinary nature was indicated in her countenance and manner; but they felt too much delicacy to enquire further into what they saw was not

designed to be communicated. They trusted that her removal would not be of long continuance, and warmly expressed the delight it would give them to have again the happiness of her society.

It afforded me exquisite pleasure to have my daughter now for my companion. It took from me in a considerable degree the dreadful feeling of forlornness, to which I had for several days been a prey. The obscure hotel in which I received her, assumed in some sort the character of a home. I changed my name. Hastening to a coffee-house in a busy and trading street, I dispatched one of the porters for any letters that might be lying for me at my banker's. I next repaired to my family-solicitor, to tell him that I had immediate occasion to go abroad, that my absence would probably be short, but that it might prove otherwise, and to direct him to prepare a letter of attorney, authorising him in my absence

to receive my income and call in my rents, so that, wherever I might be, I should be able by my single signature, without specifying the place of my residence, to obtain from him supplies, as I might have occasion. I returned therefore to my man of business the next morning, that I might execute this instrument.

At the same time a letter reached me from Rowland, acquainting me with the further particulars that had occurred at my family-mansion of Deloraine. The father and mother of Margaret were overwhelmed with the dreadful intelligence communicated to them by my steward. They had for many days feared they knew not what. William, who, after his return in a manner from the dead, had once presented himself before them, and had learned the intelligence which blasted all his hopes, had quitted their cottage abruptly, promising to return. But he had never returned. They saw him no more. They had apprehended

every thing from the steps which his desperation might suggest to him. He had indeed in an extraordinary degree moderated his proceedings, and controled his passions. He had committed no outrage, but conducted himself with that temperance and forbearance which so well accorded with every trait of his character. But the results had not been the less fatal. The utmost violence on his part could not have led to a more tragical conclusion.

The father and mother of Margaret had always loved her, with as much devotion as parents could entertain for a child. Such had been their feeling towards her from earliest infancy. But their affection had been exceedingly increased by every thing she had done since she arrived at years of maturity. No one perhaps had ever carried the sentiment of filial submission to so great an extent. She gave up her first love to the requisition of her father. She finally engaged herself to me in marriage,

not because her parents demanded it of her, but because she saw that, without prescribing it, it was the thing in the world most correspondent to their wishes. And how had this exemplary and self-denying conduct been ultimately rewarded ! They had further been deeply impressed with the spectacle of all she had suffered. Her health had ultimately sunk under the violence she had done herself, in conforming to the dictates of her father's unhallowed ambition. When at length that father had given way rather than see his daughter made the victim to her sense of filial duty, and she was encouraged to follow the dictates of her earliest love, the concession had ultimately been made abortive, and she had seen her promised consort shipwrecked before her eyes. The consequence of this calamity had been long years of depression and ill health which brought her to the brink of the grave. · Had ever a blameless hu-

man being undergone such a series of uninterrupted misfortune ?

Her parents were broken down to the earth, by the fatal intelligence which was now communicated to them. They were not allowed however to yield to the supineness of grief. I was rendered an exile from the dwelling of my fathers by the violent deed I had perpetrated. They were therefore imperiously called upon to proceed without delay to the house of mourning, where the mortal remains of their daughter for the present lay. Rowland received them with the utmost attention and deference, and told them that it was my express order to him, that all was to be done in every point in the affair as they directed. This was the only alleviation that I could afford them ; but this very concession tasked the unfortunate old man to more exertion of mind, and the issuing a greater number of precise directions, than was almost

in any way compatible with the depression and distraction of his feelings.

It was with the utmost repugnance that the parents of Margaret entered the house of a man, who by his sanguinary conduct had, to say the least of it, brought their darling child to a premature grave. It was incumbent on Borradaile to determine the spot in which the remains of his daughter should finally be deposited. On the one hand he regarded me as virtually her murderer. At the same time in another point of view he felt satisfied that her demeanour as a wife had been free from any particle of blame; and he therefore judged it due to her honour, that she should be interred in the vault appropriated to the family into which she had married.

Rowland concluded his letter, so far as regarded the Borradales, with informing me, that the father of Margaret, having first attended his wife to within a short distance of

their home, joined the melancholy procession which conveyed the body of his daughter to the vault where it was finally reposed, and appeared convulsed with agony when he gazed for the last time on her coffin.

That I may have no occasion to revert again to this part of my narrative, I will add here what I did not learn till some time afterwards. I had placed the father and mother of Margaret in a commodious habitation at a distance of thirty miles from the spot where I and their daughter resided. But the recommendation which this dwelling originally had, that it was conveniently situated for the purpose of reciprocal visits, was now converted into a spring of galling recollections. Beside that, they felt a repugnance to the occupying a house, which had been of my selecting, and for which it was understood that I undertook they should pay no rent. They looked upon the marriage of their daughter as unhallowed, and preferred

the submitting to a series of privations, rather than have any thing appertaining to them, that should remind them of this fatal connection, or should retain the semblance of an obligation to a man, who had been in so many ways, and lastly by an act of the most deplorable violence, the cause of precipitating the destruction of a child, who had been dearer to them than all the world beside. They therefore returned to the scene of their former abode on the banks of the Severn. Not indeed to the same house, for that was in the occupation of another; but to a house at the further extremity of the same village. Here, obscurely and disconsolately, they dragged out the short series of their remaining days. The mother felt perhaps most deeply for the disastrous fate of her child; and she went first. The father followed a short time after. They could not bear to hear the history of their daughter alluded to; and they could never for a moment forget it. The name of

Delorainé was to the last most distasteful to them. It was thus that, by one act of guilty violence, I accomplished the destruction of all who were in any degree connected with it.

The act by which I destroyed a man so singularly excellent and amiable, at the very period of his return to his native soil in anticipation of the most enviable felicity, was in itself sufficiently atrocious. How bitter then were my sensations, when I saw this one unconsidered violence overwhelming in its consequences all those whom I was most bound to cherish and defend from every mischief, the wife to whom I had vowed myself at the altar, and both the parents from whom she derived her existence! Why did I for a moment outlive the perpetration of this portentous evil? That will fully appear in the sequel. Before the intelligence of the entire consummation of this mischief reached me, I was already far engaged in a struggle for life,

against, as it appeared to me, a world in arms to destroy me : and the more arduous, even the more hopeless, was the struggle, the less could I entertain the thought of giving in, and throwing myself, manacled and defenceless, into the hands of my inveterate foes. No : the very nature of the contest forbade me : as long as I had one resource left, miserable beyond all names of misery as I was, I resolved, like Macbeth, to “try it to the last,” and persevere in the contention, till famine should be the sole conqueror of Deloraine.

CHAPTER XV.

BUT there was another topic touched upon in Rowland's letter, which closely affected the future fortunes of my life. It will be recollected that I had ordered the body of William to be deposited in the summer-house in my garden. I had given no further direction in that matter. Rowland had therefore felt considerably perplexed how he was to act. Here was the dead body of a person, who had apparently come to a violent end, and that by my hand. It was unavoidable, that some inquiry should be made into this, and that a question should be raised to be decided on by the legal authorities of my country. Rowland

saw that the event of this man being killed had in some way a close relation to his mistress. But I had declined giving any explanation; and he could learn nothing from any other quarter. The person was that of a total stranger. With my last words I had recommended to him to take care that I was not observed or molested in my departure, that for a few hours he should not suffer any outcry to be made in the vicinity, and that he should conduct every thing with composure and discretion. He therefore resolved to take no step till the arrival of the physician I had ordered to be sent for; and he communicated to the other servants the plan he had fixed in this respect.

The physician had no sooner examined the corpse of the unfortunate Margaret, and pronounced that life was for ever extinguished within her, than he began to question the steward respecting his knowledge of the par-

ticulars which had probably led to the event of Margaret's decease. Rowland on his part was not less anxious to state as fully as he was able all that he knew on the subject. He said that he had seen me in the earlier part of the present day, when I had returned home from transacting a business which had carried me for two nights and a day to the town of —, but that, after remaining at home for scarcely more than a few minutes, I had again quitted my house, leaving him in the greatest uncertainty as to the time at which I was to be expected back. It was therefore in the highest degree important to him to obtain the advice of some person of weight in public estimation, as to what it was proper for him to do.

Rowland then related to the physician, that, as he rode out as usual to examine the grounds, and give directions to the labourers, he had seen my carriage quit the public road, and enter the park. He had therefore turned his

horse, and advanced towards the mansion, thinking it not improbable that I might have some orders to give him. He had not proceeded many yards, when he saw his mistress, accompanied by a young man, a total stranger, of very interesting appearance, seated on the turf near the garden-wall. The same object, at the same moment, seemed to have gained my attention. My carriage stopped; I leaped out, and flew most rapidly to the spot. His mistress and the stranger were too deeply engaged with each other to observe this. I was almost upon them, when the stranger rose, and made a few steps towards me. I had already a loaded pistol in my hand, and, swifter than thought, presented it to the stranger, and laid him dead at my feet. All this was scarcely the work of a minute. Rowland added, that his mistress seemed to be worked up to a preternatural horror at what she saw,

that she exclaimed against me as a monster, called the person I had slain her dear, her best-beloved William, and, after a few frantic expressions of a similar sort, fell suddenly to the ground, and spoke no more. He proceeded to relate, that, after having addressed a few words to himself and the servants who had attended the carriage, in which I palliated the violence I had committed, but added that this was not the time for explanation and defence, I hastened into the house, and ordered my favourite saddle-horse to be prepared. I remained at home scarcely more than twenty minutes; and my last directions were, that the dead body of the person I had slain should be removed, and brought into the summer-house in the garden, and that Dr. Allen should with all speed be sent for, to see whether any thing could be done for his mistress. The message which Rowland had accordingly dispatched was a

written one, importing that his mistress lay in a very precarious state, and that it was feared she had broken a blood-vessel.

Dr. Allen was much affected by this narrative, and was in great perplexity how to proceed. He desired to be taken to the summer-house. The person of the deceased was as much a stranger to him, as it had been to Rowland. The doctor was wholly unacquainted with Margaret's previous history, and knew her only as my wife. He recommended that Rowland should by all means charge the servants to abstain from spreading the particulars of what had passed, and added that he would himself drive to the house of Mr. Bartram, a magistrate who lived within the distance of a few miles, relate to him the leading circumstances, and request his professional interference, which appeared to be loudly called for on so extraordinary an occasion. In the course of a few hours Mr. Bartram and the

doctor came together, that they might more fully search into the affair.

They were already employed in visiting the bodies of the unfortunate individuals whom I had left for dead when I departed, and eliciting from the servants who had witnessed the tragic event such information as they were able to afford, when news was brought them of the arrival of a gentleman, a stranger, who desired to see them immediately, to speak with them on the subject which was employing their attention. He was admitted.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE person who now presented himself, proved to be the especial friend of my rival. He had come with William to England, and had conceived, as was the case with all who had an opportunity of knowing the deceased, the strongest partiality and affection for him. William, as has already been related, had been carried a prisoner into Carthage. As the Spaniards had at that time been influenced by the greatest jealousy of the English, who were said to have invaded the territories, and illicitly intruded themselves upon the commerce, of their dominions in that part of the world, every

Englishman who arrived there was regarded with dislike, and was often treated with contumaciousness and barbarity. William had been exposed to the effects of this state of things. Though he was only an ordinary prisoner of war, he was carried up the country, and subjected to a sort of slavery, just as if he had been a partaker of the contraband trade. He at length escaped, and had travelled in various disguises, and through a thousand hardships, till he reached the French settlement of Cayenne. Here; as every where, he found a friend. The colony of Cayenne was in a condition that had little to recommend it. William was therefore advised and assisted to remove himself to St. Domingo. The persons by whom this step had been recommended to him, took care at the same time to furnish him with introductions to some of the most considerable settlers in this opulent and flourish-

ing island. These introductions were of course from Frenchmen of consideration in Cayenne, to their countrymen in St. Domingo.

The individuals to whom William's letters were addressed, contended with each other in the kindness and hospitality with which they entertained him. He had learned to read the French language with ease in the course of his education; and his travels since had enabled him to converse in it with the veraciousness and candour that distinguish the worthiest of his own country, and the fluency of a native. On the third or fourth day however after his arrival, he met in a party a young Englishman, being no other than the person just mentioned, named Travers, between whom and himself there immediately sprung up the warmest sentiments of friendship.

Travers first saw the light in the island of Jamaica, and was of that description of persons commonly known by the name of Creoles. His

father had been a leading member of council in the island ; and for a series of years his opinions had almost directed the resolves of the assembly, and the policy of the planters. His ascendancy however was not unenvied ; and his suggestions did not always remain unopposed. A new governor from England united himself to the projects of his adversaries, and turned the scale of policy in the island against the sentiments avowed by the elder Travers. He had distinguished himself by plans, calculated to meliorate the condition of the black cultivators of the soil, to imbue them with self-respect, and to hold out to them an ultimate prospect of independence, in proportion as any of them might be found to deserve it. His projects were not inconsistent with the true interests of the proprietors ; but they were incompatible with the mean thoughts and sordid jealousy that governed their determinations.

Travers found that he was every day declining in influence ; and his cherished schemes were thwarted in the most vexatious manner. He had flattered himself that he had made a safe and assured beginning to a better state of things, and that he should leave behind him the grateful recollection that he had laid the first stone of an edifice, which would grow stronger and more worthy of admiration, when he himself should have ceased to exist. But now the whole face of things was reversed. The progress which he had slowly and indefatigably accomplished, was destined to a rapid destruction. Every sun that rose upon the island, witnessed the revival of some evil, and the strengthening of inveterate prejudices. Nor was this the worst. The planters, who had been galled by the advance of the generous projects of Travers, now resolved to wreak their enmity on the old man. Every day they propagated scandal and lies against him. They

petitioned the government at home to concur in his exile from the colony, as a dangerous and pernicious member of society. The poor negroes were the worse treated on his account. Their oppressors augmented the severity and inhumanity of their discipline, for the purpose of signalling their triumph, and by way of vengeance against the virtuous man who had interfered in their favour. Intelligence of incarcerations and death was perpetually brought to his ears ; and it was continually asserted that all these mischiefs were to be laid to his charge. The very negroes were incited to vent their griefs in hostility to him. Those who smarted from the lash, and those whose fathers and wives had been brought to an untimely end by the cruelty of their owners, were taught to regard their calamity as the fruit of his weak and romantic support of their cause. They muttered curses against him, and sometimes broke out into open revilings and insult. They

annoyed him with looks of bitter and deadly revenge; and all these things, which would have been severely repressed by the masters in any other case, were secretly encouraged by them in this. They pulled down his fences, and trampled his crops under their feet.

The old man felt the injustice of this treatment more with the temper of a disappointed lover, than with the unalterable steadiness of a philosopher. He resolved for ever to quit the scene of his galling disappointments. He sold off his property in the island. His enemies, though delighted with the thought of his removal, yet entered into a conspiracy to thwart him in this point also. They seemed to shrink from the idea of buying what he was desirous to sell. They expressed themselves as if their pure hands would be contaminated by the bare touch of any thing that had belonged to the sacrilegious reformer. When he left the island of Jamaica for that of St. Domingo, he found

the amount of his fortune, the bequest of his ancestors, and the produce of his own superintendence and industry, reduced by more than one half.

Change of place is in a very imperfect degree the remedy of care and vexation. The elder Travers was kindly received by the planters of St. Domingo, several of whom appeared to entertain views as to the negroes very similar to his own. But the arrow that he carried with him rankled in his side. He was a true lover of his species ; and he could not endure with patience the miscarriage of his efforts. To encounter contumely from the very quarter from which he had merited only love, was too bitter. The insults and malignant triumph of his enemies, were never forgotten by him. To be made an exile, and robbed of half his fortune, on the very soil where he was rather entitled to statues and triumphal arches of gratitude, deprived him of sleep, and wasted his constitu-

tion and strength. In no long time he fell a martyr to the disappointment he had suffered.

The old man, being dead, left his son the sole representative of his name, and inheritor of his property, in that part of the world. The younger Travers had most of the qualities which are said to distinguish the descendants of European parents, born in a tropical climate. He was of the class of "souls made of fire, and children of the sun." He had been sent over to the mother-country for education. He was bred at Eton ; and his volatility, his lively qualities, and his affectionate nature had procured him a certain number of attached friends in that scene. His vivacity was inexhaustible ; his large and black eyes flashed as with heaven's own lightning ; and his courage was proof against every peril. Yet with all this he was a great and an early thinker, and capable of the most invincible perseverance. He was moody ; now communicative and gay,

the life of every party of pleasure, and seeming to have no thought of his soul that was not imparted to every bystander ; and anon, busied in inscrutable meditation,——

. as patient as the female dove,
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,
His silence would sit drooping.

He was sometimes the mere rattle of his form, a shallow stream, such as we occasionally see intersecting the green-wood meadow, imaging every surrounding object, and perpetuating none ; while at other times he had fits of study which nothing could divert, as if he would penetrate into all the mysteries of nature, and all the embarrassing involutions of the profoundest reach of human thought.

His father loved him with an intense affection, and could not bear the length of separation which his education properly demanded. He recalled him abruptly to his side in Jamaica. Here at an early age the young Travers

felt himself exempted from all control. His father knew no pleasure so great as that of abetting his vagaries. Many of them were attended with danger ; but the old man preferred taking his chance of the injuries the boy might bring upon himself by his caprices, or even the possibility of his untimely destruction, to the ungrateful task of imposing on him the bridle of parental authority. He could not bear that those eyes the sparkles of which were so enchanting, should be dulled with disappointment, or those lips whose smiles were so bewitching, should be robbed for a moment of their flexibility and grace. On the other hand, the young man, though self-willed and incapable of voluntary constraint, loved his father with exemplary affection, and regarded him as the model of all honour and virtue. He did things strange and extraordinary, sometimes annoying ; but there was no malice in his levities, which oftener obtained for him friends than enemies.

The youth however entered deeply into a feeling similar to that of his father, respecting the unpopularity and ill treatment which were heaped upon the elder Travers, in return for his disinterested exertions in the cause of humanity. This circumstance produced strong emotions in his inexperienced bosom. Though, as I have said, his conduct on a majority of occasions appeared light-hearted and thoughtless, he was, amidst all his extravagances, susceptible of deep impression, profound meditation, and inflexible purpose. He ruminated on the injustice that a large portion of mankind was capable of perpetrating, and his heart sickened at the conviction. "Strong was his love ; unbounded his resentment." Thus his character became mingled, by turns bland and beneficent as an angel, and then again darkened with a covered fury and aversion that might better beseem a demon.

Another circumstance had contributed to add

force to the particular tone of his character. An opulent proprietor of his native island, whose plantation nearly adjoined to that of his father, had a daughter, distinguished for the exquisiteness of her beauty, the grace of her form and moving, and the ingenuous sweetness of her disposition. Travers had loved her while yet a child ; and, when he returned, after having spent his school-boy years in Great Britain, he beheld her with increased preference and affection. But it was during this period of his absence, that the factious opposition to his father had attained to a portentous height. Young Travers could only meet his favourite fair one with difficulty and by stealth. The father of the lady was numbered among the most inveterate foes of the elder Travers, and therefore took the utmost pains to thwart the growing attachment. Fearful that he might fail of his purpose by other means, he abruptly removed his daughter, upon pretence of a visit to Bar-

badoes to a relation he had in that island, and contrived that a proposal of marriage should be the fruit of this visit. The daughter returned to Jamaica; and the suitor favoured by her father, followed her. Travers, agonised by the prospect of losing the mistress of his heart, sought an interview with the planter, and by every inducement he could suggest, supplied by the vehemence of his passion, and the strength of their mutual attachment, endeavoured to prevail upon him to change his resolution. But the greater was the importunity of the youth, the more inflexible did the father of the lady appear. Travers humbled himself almost to prostration; at the same time that the other party only the more insulted over him, and taunted him with the disapprobation and estrangement with which his parent was looked upon by every respectable man in the island. In fine, the fair one of whom he had been passionately enamoured, was wedded to

his rival, and lost to himself for ever. This disappointment, coming about the same time with the expulsion of his father from the scenes which from his birth had been familiar to him, his subsequent misfortunes, and at length his death through what is called a broken heart, soured the temper of the youth, and increased in him the gloom and saturnineness of disposition, with which he had been originally but slightly imbued. His gaiety had not left him for ever ; but it occurred by fits only, and was then marked with a sort of alarming and portentous excess, and followed by a relapse,

As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit,
That could be moved to smile at any thing.

Meanwhile the first want of his heart was to love ; and, when this want was emphatically gratified, he would become a mere child, and overflow with a tenderness and earnestness that could with difficulty find a parallel.

Such was the individual between whom and

William a singular and exemplary friendship sprung up, immediately upon their meeting at Cape François, the principal town of the French division of the island of St. Domingo. The similarity of disposition that existed between them speedily blew up their mutual partiality to a flame. They were both of them young men of warm hearts and a kind and benevolent temper. They were naturally of a gay and sanguine cast of mind, full of energy and hope. But both of them had suffered much from the malice of fortune; Travers at the time of their first encounter the most of the two. Deprived by a cruel concurrence of circumstances, of the father he worshipped, and crossed in the object of his love, he seemed to have given up for ever the expectation of a pleasing and acceptable mode of existence. Still his affectionate nature survived these adversities, and taught him to seize with avidity an object upon which he might centre the aspirations of his spirit.

Travers and William seemed to understand each other at the first encounter. They were the only persons of English birth at the party which brought them together. But, more than this circumstance, the fire that characterised the glance of Travers, and the overflowing love and goodness of heart so conspicuous in the countenance of William, made them feel as if they had been acquainted for ages. They exchanged looks while they sat apart at the social board, which spoke volumes. An incidental remark from one or the other, was listened to with earnestness, and seemed to make the heart of the hearer bound in his bosom. As soon as the forms of the festive board admitted it, they drew together, and retired into an obscure recess, where each of them poured out his congratulations that he had been so happy as to meet a brother, of the same stock, and speaking the same language, in so remote a part of the world; but, more than all, whose

feelings harmonized, and who as by intuition entered into each other's modes of apprehending and judging.

William had the most to tell. Travers could only relate that he had been born in the neighbour island, that he had been sent to England for education and had returned, and that through subsequent crosses and misfortunes he had been obliged to quit the island of his birth, and had recently lost his father. But William had just passed through a series of unprecedented vicissitudes. He had been a captive first, and then in a manner a slave. He had made his escape, and had experienced innumerable "accidents by flood and field." In his arduous march he seemed to have subsisted only by miracle. He had encountered continual dangers, in the inhospitable desert, from hungry beasts, and lawless savages.

When the two friends spoke of love, which they did not fail soon to do, this topic increased

their mutual sympathy. The scene had closed upon Travers: his mistress was married to another. William was not aware of any such circumstance in his case. But he had been twice violently separated from the idol of his heart: once he had been sent to Canada, and formally bid to despair; and then, when recalled with every promise of approaching felicity, had been shipwrecked in sight of land, in sight of his mistress, and unaccountably given over to a series of remorseless disasters, which had pursued him for successive years.

Neither of the two had ever met with an individual of his own sex, with whom his ideas so thoroughly accorded. They were like twins, whom some strange event had separated, and cast on opposite sides of the globe, and who, when they met, then for the first time felt a kind of repose and entire contentment, as if half of himself had been torn away from each, and was now restored, so that he became per-

fect, equal to any encounter, and armed against every assault of nature or fortune. Travers was the one best provided with worldly means to effect whatever he purposed. Travers was the first to swear eternal friendship. He unburthened his mind, and related to his new associate all the particulars of the strange malice that had pursued the author of his being, who had first been defamed and partially impoverished, and had at last died, a martyr to his too much virtue. The recollection of this, together with the wound he had himself received in the tenderest point, filled young Travers top-full with ill will and bitterest gall, and prepared him in a just and generous cause, to pursue the man of evil, or whom he should judge such, to an irremissible extremity. He was called upon by the last injunctions of his father to pass over to Europe, and there to communicate with the remaining branch of his family, the elder branch, that had staid at home to cultivate their original

demesnes, while he, of a junior stock, had crossed the Atlantic, to seek "fresh woods and pastures new."

Travers and William soon became inseparable in their pursuits and amusements. They read the same books, and talked of the same authors. They found a surprising coincidence in their tastes. The same page that had enchanted the one, charmed the other. When it happened otherwise, when the one named an author with approbation with which the other was unacquainted, or quoted a passage of deep reflection or exquisite grace which the mind of the other by some accident had never rested upon, it was like the opening of a new vein of some precious metal. It was valued for itself, and valued for the sake of the hand that guided the steps of the heedless wanderer. It was the same with the beauties of nature and art. They rode and walked together. In fishing or hunting, in botanic research, and in their occasional visits

to the select societies of St. Domingo, they were inseparable. In one point only they differed. William was impatient to return home, for there his dearest treasure was garnered, and there he anticipated the fruition of entire felicity. To Travers, who had no such anticipation, all quarters of the globe were equal, except as he desired nothing so much as to attend upon the wishes and fancies of his newly acquired friend.

While they were waiting for a vessel, which was shortly to convey them from Cape François to Havre, they in one instance joined a party of young men, who had engaged to pass over from the bay to the neighbouring island of Tortue, distant about two leagues, the object which engaged them being a hunt of the wild bulls with which the lesser island abounds. The sport was plentiful, and the party in a high state of exhilaration. In the midst of a scene of social gaiety, it is almost impossible that the most

gloomy and dejected character should not for the moment forget his sorrows. Travers no longer thought of his exile and his mistress ; and even William just then lost sight of the image of his Margaret.

In the evening they returned home by the same boat which had carried them out. The youngest of the party, a mere boy of ten or twelve years of age, who had gone with the rest rather as a spectator than a hunter, by some accident fell overboard. Travers, who saw the fall, with the lightning activity and decision so characteristic of a Creole, leaped immediately into the sea to his rescue. By this time the whole party became anxious spectators of the scene. Travers presently caught hold of the youth, and by his strength and skill became almost certain of saving him. But just at the moment an enormous shark, the universal terror of these seas, appeared in sight. One of the peculiarities of this animal, which mainly

contributes to the consternation with which he is regarded, is the astonishing rapidity with which he cuts the waves. It remained certain that Travers at least, who appeared particularly aimed at by the shark, would perish. William perhaps was not so skilful a swimmer as his friend; but the warm regard which had in a manner sprung up in a day between him and Travers, penetrated him with energy and resolution. He caught at a drawn sword, which, in the earnestness of excited feeling, was held by one of the company; and wresting it from its holder, plunged with it into the sea. Whether or no he was so expert a swimmer as a Creole, might be disputed; but he was no mean proficient in the art. The affection he felt for his newly acquired friend, the most earnest that had animated him towards any one he had seen since his shipwreck at Plymouth, augmented his powers, and guided his hand. He dived below the body of the creature that was now

almost on the point of accomplishing its fell purpose, and in an instant inflicted a mortal wound. The waves were stained with the blood of the shark; the animal writhed in agony, and then presently turned on its back, and was still. The friends, and the boy whose heedlessness had produced this terrible scene, were all saved. The mutual attachment of both the saver and the saved, was by this adventure made stronger than ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

It was not long after this incident, that Travers and William embarked together for Havre. William, who had at length arrived within a short distance of his natal shore, was animated with the most impatient desire to stand once more within the presence of Margaret, and to accomplish that union which had been so disastrously interrupted. Travers on the other hand, who had come to Europe merely in compliance with the injunction of his father to renew the intercourse with the elder branch of his family, felt no unwillingness to defer for a short time the completing of that purpose. The friends therefore, who had lately been in-

separable, now agreed to cross the English Channel by the earliest conveyance.

William, as I have said, made it his business to forward a letter to Margaret, by the first boat that came alongside as they approached the English shore. He did not wait for an answer, but proceeded with all expedition in personal search of his beloved. As he approached her residence, or any place in which he imagined that she resided, he conceived it to be due to the sacredness of their relation, that he should approach alone. This was the reason why Travers was not a witness to his visit to her father. William desired his friend to wait his return at a village at no great distance.

The change which Travers observed in him when they met again, was truly alarming. Hitherto he had seen nothing in his associate but an eager desire to bless his eye with the sight of her from whom he had been so calamitously

separated, and an anticipation of unspeakable joy. But now, when this time they met, William appeared more like a bloodless, unladen ghost, than the presence of a living man. They had parted for scarcely more than an hour; and in that short absence the lover had become so altered, as to be scarcely recognisable for the same individual. His gaiety, the exuberant life which had pervaded every limb and articulation of his frame, was gone for ever; and in its place had succeeded indications and an expression of despair that Travers could not witness without terror.

The West Indian was in a field adjoining to the village inn, when he perceived William approaching. He ran towards him. William could scarcely sustain himself. He fell on the neck of his friend in speechless agony. At length, Travers, he cried, it is all at an end with me! Why have I outlived the disasters of years? Why did not I perish by shipwreck?

Why was I not so happy as to die in slavery among the Spanish colonists of America? What evil genius urged me to cross the deserts, to summon up an unshrinking courage, to encounter hunger and privations of every sort, to contend with infuriated beasts of prey, and the contriving and subtle malice of the savage, man? I have been reserved for that which is incomparably more dreadful. For God's sake, restore to me the worst and bitterest of these calamities, restore to me the blessed ignorance, with which, if it had endured to my latest breath, I might have smiled upon the king of terrors, and said, Still am I the beloved, the favoured and happy darling of my Margaret, never thought of by her without smiles of consolation!

By degrees William recovered strength and composure to detail his misfortune to his friend. Travers would fain have disbelieved it. He said, Surely there must be some mistake! When he could no longer have the gratification to

doubt, he felt almost as deeply as William, that his calamity, with all its aggravations, was perhaps without a parallel. The bystander, where there is an entire attachment, is in some respects more to be pitied than the principal. The principal in a manner glories in the excess of his woe ; he drinks to the dregs the cup of unutterable anguish ; he says, I stand alone ; I am a spectacle for men and angels. His mind is confounded, his wits unsettled with the depth of his suffering ; he is mad. But the bystander sees it all, and makes no mistake. He is in the eclipse of a gloomy sobriety ; all with him is orderly and perspicuous ; he has no majestic part to play ; he sees that his friend is beyond the reach of consolation ; and he is cast down to the dust with the sense of his own impotence. Such was the condition of Travers.

William regarded it as the last indulgence of which he was susceptible, to repair to the

dwelling in which Margaret resided. To look upon the roof that covered her, and the window by which she occasionally passed, would still be a gratification. He might chance to gain a distant view of her figure, himself unseen. Travers could not oppose a proposition, apparently so harmless. He said to himself, I will suffer my friend to take his full swing in the natural indulgence of his sorrows ; he will be the better for it. It is in vain to endeavour to stem the ocean in the omnipotence of its rage. By and by it will have spent itself. A calm naturally succeeds to the violence of the tempest. Lassitude and a sort of calamitous repose are the inevitable sequence of preternatural exertions. It will then be time to try what I can do. Little, alas ! very little will be in my power. But so glorious a creature, a man so formed to scatter incessant blessings on all around him, must not be lost.—Travers therefore encouraged William in his fantastic

enterprise, and only conditioned with him, that he should in all cases be a spectator, never an actor, in his meditated expedition.

The friends took up a temporary abode at a town four or five miles distant from the residence of Margaret. Here William insisted that Travers should remain and proceed no further. I go, he said, as Petrarch made a pilgrimage to the grave of his Laura, for the luxury of weeping with the tomb of my beloved before me. The ancient and venerable mansion of Deloraine is her mausoleum. On such an occasion my sorrows are sacred. No living thing, who can read my feelings, and interpret my gestures, must approach. I must be surrounded with solitude, even as if the mausoleum stood by itself on a desolate island. There must be nothing to restrain the overflowing of my agonies. They shall be spent,—Travers, I swear to you, they shall be spent,—on myself alone. To the conceptions of ordinary mortals

Margaret still lives, and is mixed with the affairs of human beings. But to me, she is like Merlin, the prophet, shut up by an omnipotent charm in a tomb of her own constructing, where she must remain, alive and conscious, but without power of escape, till the final close of earthly things shall arrive.

Travers conformed himself to the desires of his friend. Every day William set out on his pilgrimage to the dwelling of his beloved; and every night he returned, overlaboured and spiritless, less living than dead, to the care and anxious watchfulness of Travers. His friend began to be alarmed in conjecturing where all this would end. He endeavoured to expostulate and draw William away, and to say, This is enough! But still the predestined youth persisted.

At length the day arrived, when William returned no more. Travers became greatly alarmed. Hitherto his friend had never failed

to show himself nightly at the town, though often in the most pitiable state. Travers well knew the direction in which William had proceeded. The unhappy youth had wandered in many an irregular maze, and had worn the sod in a manner bare with his incessant perambulations. But there was one point that was sure to be the centre of his circuits. Of this Travers was fully aware; and he set out, with impressions of the deepest anxiety, to ascertain what was become of his friend.

With no great difficulty he discovered the cottage, where William had been in the habit of calling and engaging in casual intercourse with its inhabitants. Travers entered their apartment, and solicitously enquired after any intelligence they could give him of his friend. The old woman and her daughters said, they had never been able to make out the character of their visitor. He had always been most particularly inquisitive concerning the family

at the mansion-house, yet had never shewn himself at their doors. They saw that he was a person that had been a good deal in foreign countries. He was something like a sailor, yet had very much the manners of a gentleman. They sometimes fancied that he might have been a former lover of the lady at the great house, and had come home, and found the person married, whom he had counted upon making his wife. But he had never dropped a word to them that looked that way. Two or three times persons had called at their cottage, and enquired with some earnestness respecting their accidental guest. One was a lady, not the lady from the great house, but another who lived several miles further from them. More lately, a servant belonging to the squire had come on the same errand. But, only four days ago, I had myself driven to the cottage, and left a billet for the stranger, written with a pencil, which, the day after, he had received

from them. What were the contents of the billet they knew not ; but the stranger pursued his course as before, hovering round the great house, which he appeared to regard with much attention from the brook, and from the hill which afforded him a wider prospect. Thus he had employed himself that day and the next. Each day he had spent a few minutes at their cottage. On the third they had seen him for the last time. He had gone forward as before in the direction of my residence.

This intelligence added considerably to the uneasiness of Travers. It was on the evening of the third day, that William first failed of returning to the neighbouring town. The fourth was dedicated by his friend to the endeavouring to ascertain the cause of his absence. The cottagers had seen him, as nearly as Travers could discover, in less than two hours from the time when he had left his lodgings. As the Creole appeared anxious to obtain the fullest infor-

mation they could afford, the old woman proceeded to the wicket before her door, and pointed out to him the path which led to the brook with a bridge, and the knoll that commanded a view of my house and gardens.

Aided by this direction Travers set forward. After a short time he ascended the brow, and looked down upon the house and gardens which he had never before seen. There was a foot-way that led along under the garden-wall. In this foot-way he observed a peasant, who paused in his walk, and seemed to be looking carefully at some object which had caught his attention. Travers hailed him, and hastened to the spot where he stood.

What is it, my good man, said he, that you are looking for ?

Nothing, replied the peasant : but I felt surprised to see the grass on this spot stained with blood. Some accident has happened, perhaps to one of the sheep.

Travers observed, and thought the blood on the grass more than such a cause would account for. The peasant passed on. Travers did not attempt to detain him. Upon a narrower inspection he discovered that the spots of blood, though inconsiderable after the first effusion, went on, and at length stopped at a small door leading into my garden.

He wanted no further hint than this, to induce him to push forward, and hasten to the principal entrance of the house. At the door he encountered the carriage of Dr. Allen. He asked of the attendants whether this was the house of Mr. Deloraine, and was told that it was. He immediately entered the hall, and was doubtful for a moment how he should proceed. A servant presently came down the great stair-case. Travers addressed him, and asked for his master. Mr. Deloraine was from home. When was he expected? The servant could not tell. He had left the house yesterday.

There was something in the general appearance of Travers, that seemed to call for more than ordinary attention and respect; and on the present occasion his mind was excited, and the fire in his eye was unusually striking. The footman felt that he could not shake him off, or quit him abruptly.

There was a carriage, Travers observed, at the door, which seemed to be the carriage of a physician: was any one ill?

The physician was sent for to his mistress. But the footman was afraid it was too late. He feared that his lady was dead.

Dead! and the master left home yesterday! This struck Travers. Had she been long ill?

She had been ill some time. But her death was sudden.

Had she been out lately? Travers began to suspect that Margaret and his friend might have met each other by accident.

She walked a little way only yesterday.

Walked yesterday ! and dead to-day ! This was much.—Travers paced the hall with impatient strides. He could scarcely contain himself. He directed the footman to signify to the doctor that a stranger requested immediate admission. It was granted. Travers found Dr. Allen and the magistrate together.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRAVERS apologised for his intrusion ; at the same time that he trusted his motive would sufficiently explain his abruptness. He had come in attendance on a dear friend to the neighbourhood of this place. They had for several days taken up their residence at the town four or five miles off. Though they were separated during the day-time, they met and slept every night at the chief inn in that town. Last night for the first time his friend had failed to return ; and he had set out in search of him. He had traced him to a cottage not far distant ; and the people there had directed him to Deloraine Park, as a spot he had almost

daily haunted. Travers climbed a knoll that commanded the whole prospect, and had been led by accident to a spot outside the garden-wall, where he saw a considerable stain of blood. He traced this blood to a small door leading into the garden, and there it stopped.

You must excuse me, gentlemen, he said, if you should consider this as an insufficient apology for my intrusion. My friend, whose name and history I could detail to you, if this were the proper place, had irresistible motives that impelled him to haunt the house of Deloraine. Yesterday he was seen near this spot. To-day I approach the garden, and beneath the wall I discover a considerable effusion of blood. I could not resist the impulse to enquire further. I find that the lady of the house expired suddenly yesterday, and that Deloraine left his home shortly after. One question I must be allowed to ask; and, if that question is fairly and satisfactorily answered, I shall cease to

give you any further trouble. Is there at this moment only one dead body in the house, or are there two? Can you give me no light respecting the sudden and suspicious disappearance of my friend?

Dr. Allen acknowledged that there was another dead body, that of a stranger to himself and every one in the house, who appeared to have met a violent death from the discharge of a pistol. Steps had already been taken to summon the coroner of the district, that he might pronounce officially upon so unfortunate an event; and they every moment expected his arrival. The doctor added, that the other gentleman Travers found with him was a neighbouring magistrate, whom Dr. Allen had requested to favour them with his countenance and advice on the occasion.

Travers demanded that he should instantly be admitted to see the body of the stranger. His worst fears were realised. In the garb

and features he instantly recognised his unfortunate friend. For a short time he was absorbed in grief. Here then ended the history of the unhappy William! He turned to the by-standers. He said, This is indeed the man I came to seek. Every thing relating to the catastrophe is mysterious. It must be searched to the bottom. I cannot leave the spot till the matter has been fully investigated.

Dr. Allen and the magistrate immediately admitted the right of Travers to be present on the occasion. After having remained as long in the summer-house as was necessary, they suggested the propriety of quitting the apartment, and locking the door. Travers, with the consent of the other two, took from the pocket of the deceased certain papers, which he cursorily exhibited, and which established beyond a doubt the identity of his friend. Dr. Allen then locked the door, and gave the key to the magistrate. Travers refused again to

enter the house, and employed his time in walking up and down the garden in every direction. It sufficiently appeared in the sequel that his thoughts were engaged in vowing that no stone should be left unturned to arrive at the whole truth respecting so deplorable a catastrophe, and that whoever it was that had been the means of depriving William of life should be pursued with unremitting diligence, till the vengeance of law in its fullest extent had been executed upon him.

The coroner in no long time arrived. As soon as he came, Travers was invited with the rest to attend him. A jury was impaneled to sit upon the bodies. Mr. Bartram, the magistrate, consented to be the foreman. It was suggested as a matter of propriety, that as few of the jury as might be should be chosen from among my tenants. The coroner issued his precepts ; and the inquest was appointed for the following morning.

It was soon found that my servants could give little information ; and the coroner readily assented to hear from Travers whatever he thought proper to relate of the history of the deceased. Travers accordingly stated, that he had first known William about twelve months since in the island of St. Domingo, and that all he could relate that bore on the present enquiry he had learned from the lips of his friend. But they had been on terms of unreserved intimacy ; and he had often heard him speak of the affection which had subsisted between himself and Margaret Borradale. He had returned to England, after three years of compulsory absence, to claim the hand of his betrothed ; and Travers had accompanied him in his expedition. A few weeks ago he had learned with inexpressible horror that Margaret Borradale no longer existed, but that, believing him dead, she had become the wife of Deloraine. It was now about a week that the two friends had

taken up their abode at the neighbouring town, from whence William had set out daily upon a pilgrimage to gain a sight of the house where his beloved resided. He constantly assured Travers, that he would on no account intrude into the presence of Mrs. Deloraine, but that he could not for the present refuse himself the indulgence of looking at her habitation, and, as it might chance, seeing her in her carriage at a distance, himself unseen. The day before yesterday Travers had spoken to him for the last time, and, missing him in the evening, had set out with the dawn of the next day in search of him. He felt that he knew much of his motions and his haunts; and accordingly, from that circumstance, and favoured by accident, he speedily traced him to the spot on which he expired. Travers added, that the servants of Deloraine, if they would speak the truth, could give the best account of his last and closing scene. He advised, that the in-

habitants of the cottage should be summoned, who were the last persons to whom William had spoken. He concluded with solemnly asserting, that the deceased was a person of the most unspotted manners and unimpeachable character, and that, whatever causes had led to this deplorable catastrophe, it was impossible that he should have been in the smallest degree in fault.

The remaining circumstances were supplied by my own servants. They admitted that the stranger had fallen by my hand. There was no opportunity however for a charge of previous malice, as having produced the catastrophe. Every thing passed on the instant, I having leaped from my carriage with a pistol in my hand, and advanced with eagerness to the fatal spot; not a word had been spoken on either side. On another point the servants delivered themselves with delicacy and reserve, being at once anxious to palliate my violence, and not

to cast any unbecoming imputation on their unfortunate mistress. They admitted, that Margaret and the stranger had been discovered in a familiar and confidential attitude sitting on the turf; and they affirmed their persuasion, that it was this spectacle that worked me to extremity. They were required to state precisely what they saw; and the result was that they observed nothing in any way licentious or indecent, but that the inference was a strong expression of kindness and entire good understanding between the parties. They were farther called upon to speak as to any previous knowledge they might have had of the person of the deceased. To this they answered with the utmost clearness. Up to the day, and to the very instant of the catastrophe, they had never seen him. They were of course wholly ignorant of any previous intercourse between the stranger and their mistress. He had never visited at the house; and Margaret, for a con-

siderable time past, had scarcely been from home. The cottagers had little to add to the evidence already given. They had seen the deceased almost daily for several days past under their roof. He had been from the first most particular in his enquiries respecting the family at the great house, and his walks, when he went from them in the day-time, had always been in that direction.

Such was the sum of the evidence laid before the coroner's inquest on the following morning. The task devolved on that gentleman to comment on the testimony adduced. He said, there could be no doubt that the deceased fell by my hand, that I was armed, and the person I had killed was weaponless, had discovered no intention of assailing, and had had no space for resisting me. These were the principal constituents of what the law denominates the crime of murder. The only farther circumstance for the consideration of the jury, was

whether there had been sufficient time interposed to afford room for what our jurisprudence regarded as malice aforethought, or whether my act had been so suddenly perpetrated, as to exclude what was technically styled malice. The law was wisely jealous on this head; and the slightest interval between the provocation and the consequent act, giving opportunity for deliberation, was always construed as inferring malice. The life of man was the most sacred of all possessions; it must not be trifled withal; and instinct itself had wisely hedged in the thought of destroying it with indescribable shrinking and horror. As to the cause that prompted my violence, the provocation had been discovered by me as I sat in my carriage; I had opened the door, had leaped out, and had run a certain distance; this interval undoubtedly constituted such an assignable portion of time as the law prescribed to a malicious killing. Jealousy was certainly one of those impulses

which the law regarded with special allowance. There might be many circumstances of mitigation in my favour; and he hoped I should be able to establish a case which would clear me from the capital charge. There was enough however in what had now been sworn to, to make it imperative on them to pronounce a verdict of wilful murder against me, and to send me to a jury of my country. This verdict was accordingly found and recorded; and the coroner in conclusion issued his warrant for my apprehension. The case of Margaret was next considered; and she was pronounced to have died by “the visitation of God.”

CHAPTER XIX.

TRAVERS listened to the whole of this proceeding with intense interest ; his countenance and his gestures discovered in a variety of ways the perturbation of his mind, though he endeavoured by all the means in his power to control them. He regarded William, from every thing he had known of him, as of all men the most worthy to be loved, and the most unfortunate. He resolved that a lasting tomb should be erected to his memory, and that, as among the ancient Greeks, the blood of a human sacrifice should be spilled upon it. He considered himself as the being upon whom the care of fulfilling this to the minutest letter

was devolved. William had left no kindred, and, through his long absence from his country, had perhaps scarcely a friend in Great Britain. I had doubtless taken advantage of this circumstance, and had flattered myself (so Travers painted it to his thoughts), that I could remove an unwelcome intruder upon my enjoyments and my peace, and that no man would regard it. But it should be seen here, even as we read it in the Scriptures, that God should shew himself “able even from the stones of the earth to raise up” an avenger. Himself, from a distant quarter of the globe and another hemisphere, had been brought to the very spot for this special purpose, to teach me that the life of a man ten thousand times worthier than myself, should not be sacrificed with impunity to my causeless jealousy, and my fear even of the shadow of a rival. He had known all William’s unspeakable excellencies; he had studied them from day to day without ever

coming to an end of them, could read in that record and combination of high qualities for ever and for ever. William had delivered him from the jaws of the sea-monster, when in the act to devour him; and the life he had saved should now in this extremity be wholly consecrated to shew the sense Travers entertained of the benefit he had received. He would hunt me to the earth's utmost verge:

He would dwindle, peak and pine;
Sleep should, neither night nor day,
Hang upon his pent-house lid:

he would penetrate into every hiding place that could conceal me; "no place, though e'er so holy, should protect me: no shape that artful fear e'er formed should shield me:" but I should suffer to the utmost letter the vengeance that the law has reserved for the most unspeakable of crimes:

Travers obtained by his importunity a duplicate of the warrant for my apprehension. He

said there was reason to fear that I might be upon the point of quitting England. The ordinary officers for executing such a warrant might be indifferently qualified, and would scarcely be prevailed on to make exertions beyond a certain point, or to pass to foreign countries to enforce it. He desired nothing but justice ; if the law pronounced me guiltless of the crime of murder, he should be contented. But he was resolved I should be placed under the judgment of that law. If I had passed to other countries, he would not on that account cease to pursue me. If he possessed a duplicate of the warrant, that would be a document, authentically designating me and my offence ; and the proper officers in foreign countries might be induced to back it, and to assist in my apprehension, and in the delivering me up. There could be no impropriety in granting his request ; and, if it were refused, it would be too plain that, while they pretended a zeal for

justice, they were disposed to stir as little a way as they could, and were inclined to shelter the opulent, and, as they might call it, the honourable offender, against the cause of the friendless.

The last desire expressed by Travers was that the body of his friend should be surrendered to his care. This was readily conceded to him. He sought out the village-churchyard where the father and mother of William had been interred upon the banks of the Severn. The funeral was with all privacy; there was none but Travers to mourn. The churchyard was obscure, humble and unpretending. A few yew-trees were scattered here and there. Three of them grew near the grave of William and his parents, as if shadowing out the modest and virtuous three that there lay buried. The paths that led to the churchyard were few; the place was solitary, and the approaches little frequented.

Travers had waited on the simple solemnity of the interment. After it was over, and he had the scene entirely to himself, he returned by the light of the starry heavens to take a last leave of his friend. He said, Thou hast fallen untimely, like a tender and delicate flower withered by the nipping blast. Thou wert born to be loved; and yet I see no one but myself who approaches to mourn thee. A short banishment of three years has sufficed to disperse the companions of thy youth, to send them to distant abodes, or to engross their thoughts with newer undertakings and pursuits. She whom thou prizedst above every competitor, by a strange fate forgot thee first, and then perished by the same blow that brought thee to the tomb. Rigorous and unparalleled has been thy destiny. Accepted first, to be afterwards rejected. Early sacrificed by her whom thou hadst chosen, to an exaggerated sentiment of filial obedience; and again recalled.

A victim to shipwreck and the contention of the elements, and then driven far away by a concurrence of events, for three years thou contendedst with miraculous perseverance against them all, and finally camest off conqueror. Did ever man, under the bitterest and most aggravated disappointment, conduct himself with such marvellous temperance and self-denying virtue as thou hast done? But all thy moderation has proved vain. The wretch, who first robbed thee of a treasure beyond all price in thy judgment, of thy heart of hearts, has now, driven by a gust of passion, prompted by a senseless jealousy that spurned all deliberation and enquiry, finally deprived thee of life.

But dearly shall he rue his unconsidered precipitation! I will sacrifice all other thoughts to the desire of vengeance. Not a hasty retribution! The slow and tormenting process of law, which takes no account of any human feelings, but delights in the sternness of its

march and the unaltered steadiness of its pace, and causes its victim with slow respirations to drain off the last drop from its cup of woe, shall be reserved for the offender. The longer shall be the pursuit, the more bitter shall be its sensations. At every escape he shall feel that the last retribution is but suspended, that the chase is but begun, that the dogs of scent are ever at his heels to baffle his swiftness, and the beagles of the law to embarrass him in his doublings.

Thus strange was the result of my unhallowed violence. Whatever I had yet to suffer was the result of the deep sympathy that had grown up between Travers and William. They were persons of so affectionate a temper, as has almost never been equalled. Yet by a concurrence of events, or by the original construction of their minds, William was of unalterable gentleness and tenderness of disposition, that would scarcely crush the bruised reed, or be

roused to fury and hatred by any injustice ; while Travers, setting out in appearance from the same point, would convert all his kindness of nature into gall, and proceed in a remorseless career of vengeance, from which, as it seemed, no expostulation would turn him, and which no lapse of time would diminish or remit.

Before he finally set out on the expedition he prescribed to himself, Travers directed that a mural monument of choice marble should be placed in a conspicuous situation against the wall of the village-church, near the spot where the remains of his friend were interred, with an inscription signifying, that he whose bones were deposited in the place beneath, had fallen a victim to the sentiment of an inviolable love, that he had preserved this passion undiminished through three years of wandering and distress, and that finally he was welcomed to his native land by an act of the most unparalleled violence. It went on to say, that the mistress of his dear-

est affections died on the same day that marked him for the tomb, and that, though their ashes had not been mingled in their final receptacle, yet her devotion to his love had remained undiminished, and her agony for his unmerited fate had been the cause that she died in the same hour, and on the very spot where he had been slain.

I have in this place related a number of particulars that I did not come to the full knowledge of till a considerable time afterwards; because they were necessary to the exact delineation of the position in which I now stood; and I was willing the reader should clearly understand the perils that environed me, even at the time that I was lulled into comparative security.

It is also right that I should apologise for having recorded the visit of the parents of Margaret and their unhappy fate out of the exact order of time. They did not arrive at the house

which contained the body of their child, till the inquest of the coroner had been completed.

The necessary consequence of my exile was that the house in which I had been born, and where I had spent so many years of my existence, immediately became uninhabited. Rowland took possession of the lodge at the park-gate, and held it for his duty to visit the mansion for the most part on every day of his life. But the house remained without a tenant for a number of years. The garden exhibited obvious tokens of neglect; and thorns and thistles sprung up in it abundantly. The peasants intuitively shrank away from the spot which retained, or was believed by their affrighted sense to retain, marks of the blood of the murdered, and made many a devious circuit to avoid it; while the apartment in which Margaret had been laid out and confined, and still more the summer-house in the garden, got the reputation of being haunted; and the lovers who had

perished thus untimely, were seen to trouble the walks within, and the path on the outside of the wall. Lights were said occasionally to glimmer from the windows, and fearful noises to be heard. A female figure appeared to pass from apartment to apartment, and to ascend and descend the great staircase. The longer the house continued untenanted by the living dwellers on the earth, the more was it regarded by the ignorant and superstitious rustics as appropriated to the use of the supernatural and unearthly. These were circumstances that added not a little to the odium in which my name was held by the meaner class of my tenants, who, while I lived among them, had ever found me a kind and indulgent landlord, and had poured down blessings on my name.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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